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THE POEMS OF
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

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WILLIAM WORDSWORTH



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INTERIOR OF DOVE COTTAGE, GRASMERE

FROM A DRAWING BY E. H. NEW

THE POEMS OF
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

EDITED
WITH AN INTRODUCTION
AND NOTES BY
NOWELL CHARLES SMITH, M.A.

LATE FELLOW OF NEW COLLEGE, AND FORMERLY
FELLOW OF MAGDALEN COLLEGE, OXFORD

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. III

WITH A FRONTISPIECE



METHUEN AND CO.,
36 ESSEX STREET W.C.
LONDON

THE POEMS OF
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

EDITED BY

JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY THE EDITOR

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EPITAPHS AND ELEGIAC PIECES

EPITAPHS

TRANSLATED FROM CHIABRERA

I

WEEP not, belovèd Friends ! nor let the air
For me with sighs be troubled. Not from life
Have I been taken ; this is genuine life
And this alone—the life which now I live
In peace eternal ; where desire and joy
Together move in fellowship without end.—
Francesco Ceni willed that, after death,
His tombstone thus should speak for him. And surely
Small cause there is for that fond wish of ours
Long to continue in this world ; a world 10
That keeps not faith, nor yet can point a hope
To good, whereof itself is destitute.

Published 1837

II

PERHAPS some needful service of the State
Drew TITUS from the depth of studious bowers,
And doomed him to contend in faithless courts,
Where gold determines between right and wrong.
Yet did at length his loyalty of heart,
And his pure native genius, lead him back
To wait upon the bright and gracious Muses,
Whom he had early loved. And not in vain
Such course he held ! Bologna's learned schools
Were gladdened by the Sage's voice, and hung 10
With fondness on those sweet Nestorian strains.
There pleasure crowned his days ; and all his thoughts
A roseate fragrance breathed.¹—O human life,
That never art secure from dolorous change !

¹ Ivi vivea giocondo e i suoi pensieri
Erano tutti rose.

The Translator had not skill to come nearer to his original.

Behold a high injunction suddenly
 To Arno's side hath brought him, and he charmed
 A Tuscan audience : but full soon was called
 To the perpetual silence of the grave.
 Mourn, Italy, the loss of him who stood
 A Champion steadfast and invincible,
 To quell the rage of literary War !

20

1809

III

O THOU who movest onward with a mind
 Intent upon thy way, pause, though in haste !
 'Twill be no fruitless moment. I was born
 Within Savona's walls, of gentle blood.
 On Tiber's banks my youth was dedicate
 To sacred studies ; and the Roman Shepherd
 Gave to my charge Urbino's numerous flock.
 Well did I watch, much laboured, nor had power
 To escape from many and strange indignities ;
 Was smitten by the great ones of the world,
 But did not fall ; for Virtue braves all shocks,
 Upon herself resting immoveably.
 Me did a kindlier fortune then invite
 To serve the glorious Henry, King of France,
 And in his hands I saw a high reward
 Stretched out for my acceptance,—but Death came.
 Now, Reader, learn from this my fate, how false,
 How treacherous to her promise, is the world ;
 And trust in God—to whose eternal doom
 Must bend the sceptred Potentates of earth.

10

1809

20

IV

THERE never breathed a man who, when his life
 Was closing, might not of that life relate
 Toils long and hard.—The warrior will report
 Of wounds, and bright swords flashing in the field,
 And blast of trumpets. He who hath been doomed
 To bow his forehead in the courts of kings,
 Will tell of fraud and never-ceasing hate,
 Envy and heart-inquietude, derived
 From intricate cabals of treacherous friends.
 I, who on shipboard lived from earliest youth,
 Could represent the countenance horrible
 Of the vexed waters, and the indignant rage

10

Of Auster and Boötes. Fifty years
 Over the well-steered galleys did I rule :—
 From huge Pelorus to the Atlantic pillars,
 Rises no mountain to mine eyes unknown ;
 And the broad gulfs I traversed oft and oft.
 Of every cloud which in the heavens might stir
 I knew the force ; and hence the rough sea's pride
 Availed not to my Vessel's overthrow. 20
 What noble pomp and frequent have not I
 On regal decks beheld ! yet in the end
 I learned that one poor moment can suffice
 To equalise the lofty and the low.
 We sail the sea of life—a *Calm* One finds,
 And One a *Tempest*—and, the voyage o'er,
 Death is the quiet haven of us all.
 If more of my condition ye would know,
 Savona was my birthplace, and I sprang
 Of noble parents : seventy years and three 30
 Lived I—then yielded to a slow disease.

1809

V

TRUE is it that Ambrosio Salinero
 With an untoward fate was long involved
 In odious litigation ; and full long,
 Fate harder still ! had he to endure assaults
 Of racking malady. And true it is
 That not the less a frank courageous heart
 And buoyant spirit triumphed over pain ;
 And he was strong to follow in the steps
 Of the fair Muses. Not a covert path
 Leads to the dear Parnassian forest's shade, 10
 That might from him be hidden ; not a track
 Mounts to pellucid Hippocrene, but he
 Had traced its windings.—This Savona knows,
 Yet no sepulchral honours to her Son
 She paid, for in our age the heart is ruled
 Only by gold. And now a simple stone
 Inscribed with this memorial here is raised
 By his bereft, his lonely, Chiabrera.
 Think not, O Passenger ! who read'st the lines
 That an exceeding love hath dazzled me ; 20
 No—he was One whose memory ought to spread
 Where'er Permessus bears an honoured name,
 And live as long as its pure stream shall flow.

Published 1837

VI

DESTINED to war from very infancy
 Was I, Roberto Dati, and I took
 In Malta the white symbol of the Cross:
 Nor in life's vigorous season did I shun
 Hazard or toil; among the sands was seen
 Of Lybia; and not seldom, on the banks
 Of wide Hungarian Danube, 'twas my lot
 To hear the sanguinary trumpet sounded.
 So lived I, and repined not at such fate:
 This only grieves me, for it seems a wrong,
 That stripped of arms I to my end am brought
 On the soft down of my paternal home.
 Yet haply Arno shall be spared all cause
 To blush for me. Thou, loiter not nor halt
 In thy appointed way, and bear in mind
 How fleeting and how frail is human life!

10

1809

VII

O FLOWER of all that springs from gentle blood,
 And all that generous nurture breeds to make
 Youth amiable; O friend so true of soul
 To fair Aglaia; by what envy moved,
 Lelius! has death cut short thy brilliant day
 In its sweet opening? and what dire mishap
 Has from Savona torn her best delight?
 For thee she mourns, nor e'er will cease to mourn;
 And, should the out-pourings of her eyes suffice not
 For her heart's grief, she will entreat Sebeto
 Not to withhold his bounteous aid, Sebeto
 Who saw thee, on his margin, yield to death,
 In the chaste arms of thy beloved Love!
 What profit riches? what does youth avail?
 Dust are our hopes;—I, weeping bitterly,
 Penned these sad lines, nor can forbear to pray
 That every gentle Spirit hither led
 May read them not without some bitter tears.

10

Published 1837

VIII

NOT without heavy grief of heart did He
 On whom the duty fell (for at that time
 The father sojourned in a distant land)
 Deposit in the hollow of this tomb
 A brother's Child, most tenderly beloved!
 FRANCESCO was the name the Youth had borne,

Pozzobonelli his illustrious house ;
 And, when beneath this stone the Corse was laid,
 The eyes of all Savona streamed with tears.
 Alas! the twentieth April of his life 10
 Had scarcely flowered: and at this early time,
 By genuine virtue he inspired a hope
 That greatly cheered his country: to his kin
 He promised comfort; and the flattering thoughts
 His friends had in their fondness entertained,¹
 He suffered not to languish or decay.
 Now is there not good reason to break forth
 Into a passionate lament? O Soul!
 Short while a Pilgrim in our nether world,
 Do thou enjoy the calm empyreal air; 20
 And round this earthly tomb let roses rise,
 An everlasting spring! in memory
 Of that delightful fragrance which was once
 From thy mild manners quietly exhaled.

1809

IX

PAUSE, courteous Spirit!—Baldi supplicates
 That Thou, with no reluctant voice, for him
 Here laid in mortal darkness, wouldst prefer
 A prayer to the Redeemer of the world.
 This to the dead by sacred right belongs;
 All else is nothing.—Did occasion suit
 To tell his worth, the marble of this tomb
 Would ill suffice: for Plato's lore sublime,
 And all the wisdom of the Stagyrice,
 Enriched and beautified his studious mind: 10
 With Archimedes also he conversed
 As with a chosen friend; nor did he leave
 Those laureat wreaths ungathered which the Nymphs
 Twine near their loved Permessus.—Finally,
 Himself above each lower thought uplifting,
 His ears he closed to listen to the songs
 Which Sion's Kings did consecrate of old;
 And his Permessus found on Lebanon.
 A blessed Man! who of protracted days
 Made not, as thousands do, a vulgar sleep; 20
 But truly did *He* live his life. Urbino,
 Take pride in him!—O Passenger, farewell!

1809

¹ In justice to the Author, I subjoin the original:

e degli amici
 Non lasciava languire i bei pensieri.

I

BY a blest Husband guided, Mary came
 From nearest kindred, Vernon her new name;
 She came, though meek of soul, in seemly pride
 Of happiness and hope, a youthful Bride.
 O dread reverse! if aught *be* so, which proves
 That God will chasten whom he dearly loves.
 Faith bore her up through pains in mercy given,
 And troubles that were each a step to Heaven:
 Two Babes were laid in earth before she died;
 A third now slumbers at the Mother's side; 10
 Its Sister-twin survives, whose smiles afford
 A trembling solace to her widowed Lord.

Reader! if to thy bosom cling the pain
 Of recent sorrow combated in vain;
 Or if thy cherished grief have failed to thwart
 Time still intent on his insidious part,
 Lulling the mourner's best good thoughts asleep,
 Pilfering regrets we would, but cannot, keep;
 Bear with Him—judge *Him* gently who makes known
 His bitter loss by this memorial Stone; 20
 And pray that in his faithful breast the grace
 Of resignation find a hallowed place.

Published 1835

II

SIX months to six years added he remained
 Upon this sinful earth, by sin unstained:
 O blessed Lord! whose mercy then removed
 A Child whom every eye that looked on loved;
 Support us, teach us calmly to resign
 What we possessed, and now is wholly thine!
 Published 1837

III

CENOTAPH

In affectionate remembrance of Frances Fermor, whose remains are deposited
 in the church of Claines, near Worcester, this stone is erected by her sister,
 Dame Margaret, wife of Sir George Beaumont, Bart., who, feeling not less
 than the love of a brother for the deceased, commends this memorial to the
 care of his heirs and successors in the possession of this place.

BY vain affections unenthralled,
 Though resolute when duty called
 To meet the world's broad eye,
 Pure as the holiest cloistered nun

That ever feared the tempting sun,
 Did Fermor live and die.
 This Tablet, hallowed by her name,
 One heart-relieving tear may claim;
 But if the pensive gloom
 Of fond regret be still thy choice,
 Exalt thy spirit, hear the voice
 Of Jesus from her tomb!

10

'I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE.'

1824

IV

EPITAPH

IN THE CHAPEL-YARD OF LANGDALE, WESTMORELAND

BY playful smiles, (alas! too oft
 A sad heart's sunshine) by a soft
 And gentle nature, and a free
 Yet modest hand of charity,
 Through life was OWEN LLOYD endeared
 To young and old; and how revered
 Had been that pious spirit, a tide
 Of humble mourners testified,
 When, after pains dispensed to prove
 The measure of God's chastening love,
 Here, brought from far, his corse found rest,—
 Fulfilment of his own request;—
 Urged less for this Yew's shade, though he
 Planted with such fond hope the tree;
 Less for the love of stream and rock,
 Dear as they were, than that his Flock,
 When they no more their Pastor's voice
 Could hear to guide them in their choice
 Through good and evil, help might have,
 Admonished, from his silent grave,
 Of righteousness, of sins forgiven,
 For peace on earth and bliss in heaven.

10

20

1841

V

ADDRESS TO THE SCHOLARS OF THE
 VILLAGE SCHOOL OF —

1798

I COME, ye little noisy Crew,
 Not long your pastime to prevent;
 I heard the blessing which to you

Our common Friend and Father sent.
 I kissed his cheek before he died;
 And when his breath was fled,
 I raised, while kneeling by his side,
 His hand:—it dropped like lead.
 Your hands, dear Little-ones, do all
 That can be done, will never fall
 Like his till they are dead.
 By night or day, blow foul or fair,
 Ne'er will the best of all your train
 Play with the locks of his white hair,
 Or stand between his knees again.

10

Here did he sit confined for hours;
 But he could see the woods and plains,
 Could hear the wind and mark the showers
 Come streaming down the streaming panes.
 Now stretched beneath his grass-green mound
 He rests a prisoner of the ground.
 He loved the breathing air,
 He loved the sun, but if it rise
 Or set, to him where now he lies,
 Brings not a moment's care.
 Alas! what idle words; but take
 The Dirge which for our Master's sake
 And yours, love prompted me to make.
 The rhymes so homely in attire
 With learned ears may ill agree,
 But chanted by your Orphan Quire
 Will make a touching melody.

20

30

DIRGE

MOURN, Shepherd, near thy old grey stone;
 Thou Angler, by the silent flood;
 And mourn when thou art all alone,
 Thou Woodman, in the distant wood!

Thou one blind Sailor, rich in joy
 Though blind, thy tunes in sadness hum;
 And mourn, thou poor half-witted Boy!
 Born deaf, and living deaf and dumb.

40

Thou drooping sick Man, bless the Guide
 Who checked or turned thy headstrong youth,
 As he before had sanctified
 Thy infancy with heavenly truth.

Ye Striplings, light of heart and gay,
 Bold settlers on some foreign shore,
 Give, when your thoughts are turned this way,
 A sigh to him whom we deplore.

For us who here in funeral strain
 With one accord our voices raise, 50
 Let sorrow overcharged with pain
 Be lost in thankfulness and praise.

And when our hearts shall feel a sting
 From ill we meet or good we miss,
 May touches of his memory bring
 Fond healing, like a mother's kiss.

BY THE SIDE OF THE GRAVE SOME YEARS AFTER

Long time his pulse hath ceased to beat ;
 But benefits, his gift, we trace—
 Expressed in every eye we meet
 Round this dear Vale, his native place. 60

To stately Hall and Cottage rude
 Flowed from his life what still they hold,
 Light pleasures, every day renewed ;
 And blessings half a century old.

Oh true of heart, of spirit gay,
 Thy faults, where not already gone
 From memory, prolong their stay
 For charity's sweet sake alone.

Such solace find we for our loss ;
 And what beyond this thought we crave 70
 Comes in the promise from the Cross,
 Shining upon thy happy grave.¹

1798

VI

ELEGIAC STANZAS

SUGGESTED BY A PICTURE OF PEELE CASTLE IN A STORM,
 PAINTED BY SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT

I WAS thy neighbour once, thou rugged Pile !
 Four summer weeks I dwelt in sight of thee :
 I saw thee every day ; and all the while
 Thy Form was sleeping on a glassy sea.

¹ See upon the subject of the three foregoing pieces, the 'Matthew' poems, vol. II., pp. 337 foll.

So pure the sky, so quiet was the air!
 So like, so very like, was day to day!
 Whene'er I looked, thy Image still was there;
 It trembled, but it never passed away.

How perfect was the calm! it seemed no sleep;
 No mood, which season takes away, or brings: 10
 I could have fancied that the mighty Deep
 Was even the gentlest of all gentle Things.

Ah! THEN, if mine had been the Painter's hand,
 To express what then I saw; and add the gleam,
 The light that never was, on sea or land,
 The consecration, and the Poet's dream;

I would have planted thee, thou hoary Pile
 Amid a world how different from this!
 Beside a sea that could not cease to smile;
 On tranquil land, beneath a sky of bliss. 20

Thou shouldst have seemed a treasure-house divine
 Of peaceful years; a chronicle of heaven;—
 Of all the sunbeams that did ever shine
 The very sweetest had to thee been given.

A Picture had it been of lasting ease,
 Elysian quiet, without toil or strife;
 No motion but the moving tide, a breeze,
 Or merely silent Nature's breathing life.

Such, in the fond illusion of my heart,
 Such Picture would I at that time have made: 30
 And seen the soul of truth in every part,
 A steadfast peace that might not be betrayed.

So once it would have been,—'tis so no more;
 I have submitted to a new control:
 A power is gone, which nothing can restore;
 A deep distress hath humanised my Soul.

Not for a moment could I now behold
 A smiling sea, and be what I have been:
 The feeling of my loss will ne'er be old;
 This, which I know, I speak with mind serene. 40

Then, Beaumont, Friend! who would have been the
 Friend,
 If he had lived, of Him whom I deplore,
 This work of thine I blame not, but commend;
 This sea in anger, and that dismal shore.

O 'tis a passionate Work !—yet wise and well,
Well chosen is the spirit that is here ;
That Hulk which labours in the deadly swell,
This rueful sky, this pageantry of fear !

And this huge Castle, standing here sublime,
I love to see the look with which it braves, 50
Cased in the unfeeling armour of old time,
The lightning, the fierce wind, and trampling waves.

Farewell, farewell the heart that lives alone,
Housed in a dream, at distance from the Kind !
Such happiness, wherever it be known,
Is to be pitied ; for 'tis surely blind.

But welcome fortitude, and patient cheer,
And frequent sights of what is to be borne !
Such sights, or worse, as are before me here.—
Not without hope we suffer and we mourn. 60

1805

VII

TO THE DAISY

SWEET Flower ! belike one day to have
A place upon thy Poet's grave,
I welcome thee once more :
But He, who was on land, at sea,
My Brother, too, in loving thee,
Although he loved more silently,
Sleeps by his native shore.

Ah ! hopeful, hopeful was the day
When to that Ship he bent his way,
To govern and to guide : 10
His wish was gained : a little time
Would bring him back in manhood's prime
And free for life, these hills to climb,
With all his wants supplied.

And full of hope day followed day
While that stout Ship at anchor lay
Beside the shores of Wight ;
The May had then made all things green ;
And, floating there, in pomp serene,
That Ship was goodly to be seen, 20
His pride and his delight !

Yet then, when called ashore, he sought
 The tender peace of rural thought :
 In more than happy mood
 To your abodes, bright daisy Flowers !
 He then would steal at leisure hours,
 And loved you glittering in your bowers,
 A starry multitude.

But hark the word !—the ship is gone ;—
 Returns from her long course :—anon
 Sets sail :—in season due,
 Once more on English earth they stand :
 But, when a third time from the land
 They parted, sorrow was at hand
 For Him and for his crew.

30

Ill-fated Vessel !—ghastly shock !
 —At length delivered from the rock,
 The deep she hath regained ;
 And through the stormy night they steer ;
 Labouring for life, in hope and fear,
 To reach a safer shore—how near,
 Yet not to be attained !

40

‘Silence !’ the brave Commander cried ;
 To that calm word a shriek replied,
 It was the last death-shriek.
 —A few (my soul oft sees that sight)
 Survive upon the tall mast’s height ;
 But one dear remnant of the night—
 For Him in vain I seek.

Six weeks beneath the moving sea
 He lay in slumber quietly ;
 Unforced by wind or wave
 To quit the Ship for which he died,
 (All claims of duty satisfied ;)
 And there they found him at her side ;
 And bore him to the grave.

50

Vain service ! yet not vainly done
 For this, if other end were none,
 That He, who had been cast
 Upon a way of life unmeet
 For such a gentle Soul and sweet,
 Should find an undisturbed retreat
 Near what he loved, at last—

60

That neighbourhood of grove and field
 To Him a resting-place should yield,
 A meek man and a brave !
 The birds shall sing and ocean make
 A mournful murmur for *his* sake ;
 And Thou, sweet Flower, shalt sleep and wake
 Upon his senseless grave.

1805

70

VIII

ELEGIAC VERSES

IN MEMORY OF MY BROTHER, JOHN WORDSWORTH

COMMANDER of the E. I. Company's ship, the *Earl of Abergavenny*, in which he perished by calamitous shipwreck, Feb. 6th, 1805. Composed near the mountain track, that leads from Grasmere through Gridale Hawes, where it descends towards Patterdale.

1805

I

THE Sheep-boy whistled loud, and lo !
 That instant, startled by the shock,
 The Buzzard mounted from the rock
 Deliberate and slow :
 Lord of the air, he took his flight ;
 Oh ! could he on that woeful night
 Have lent his wing, my Brother dear,
 For one poor moment's space to Thee,
 And all who struggled with the Sea,
 When safety was so near.

10

II

Thus in the weakness of my heart
 I spoke (but let that pang be still)
 When rising from the rock at will,
 I saw the Bird depart.
 And let me calmly bless the Power
 That meets me in this unknown Flower,
 Affecting type of him I mourn !
 With calmness suffer and believe,
 And grieve, and know that I must grieve,
 Not cheerless, though forlorn.

20

III

Here did we stop ; and here looked round
 While each into himself descends,
 For that last thought of parting Friends
 That is not to be found.

Hidden was Grasmere Vale from sight,
 Our home and his, his heart's delight,
 His quiet heart's selected home.
 But time before him melts away,
 And he hath feeling of a day
 Of blessedness to come.

30

IV

Full soon in sorrow did I weep,
 Taught that the mutual hope was dust,
 In sorrow, but for higher trust,
 How miserably deep!
 All vanished in a single word,
 A breath, a sound, and scarcely heard.
 Sea—Ship—drowned—Shipwreck—so it came,
 The meek, the brave, the good, was gone;
 He who had been our living John
 Was nothing but a name.

40

V

That was indeed a parting! oh,
 Glad am I, glad that it is past;
 For there were some on whom it cast
 Unutterable woe.
 But they as well as I have gains;—
 From many a humble source, to pains
 Like these, there comes a mild release;
 Even here I feel it, even this Plant
 Is in its beauty ministrant
 To comfort and to peace.

50

VI

He would have loved thy modest grace,
 Meek Flower! To Him I would have said,
 'It grows upon its native bed
 Beside our Parting-place;
 There, cleaving to the ground, it lies
 With multitude of purple eyes,
 Spangling a cushion green like moss;
 But we will see it, joyful tide!
 Some day, to see it in its pride,
 The mountain will we cross.'¹

60

¹ The plant alluded to is the Moss Campion (*Silene acaulis*, of Linnæus). This most beautiful plant is scarce in England, though it is found in great abundance upon the mountains of Scotland. The first specimen I ever saw of it, in its native bed, was singularly fine, the tuft or cushion being at least eight inches in diameter, and the root proportionably thick. I have only

VII

—Brother and friend, if verse of mine
Have power to make thy virtues known,
Here let a monumental Stone
Stand—sacred as a Shrine ;
And to the few who pass this way,
Traveller or Shepherd, let it say,
Long as these mighty rocks endure,—
Oh do not Thou too fondly brood,
Although deserving of all good,
On any earthly hope, however pure !

1805

70

IX

SONNET

WHY should we weep or mourn, Angelic boy,
For such thou wert ere from our sight removed,
Holy, and ever dutiful—beloved
From day to day with never-ceasing joy,
And hopes as dear as could the heart employ
In aught to earth pertaining ? Death has proved
His might, nor less his mercy, as behoved—
Death conscious that he only could destroy
The bodily frame. That beauty is laid low
To moulder in a far-off field of Rome ;
But Heaven is now, blest Child, thy Spirit's home :
When such divine communion, which we know,
Is felt, thy Roman burial-place will be
Surely a sweet remembrancer of Thee.

1846

10

X

LINES

COMPOSED at Grasmere, during a walk one Evening, after a stormy day, the Author having just read in a Newspaper that the dissolution of Mr. Fox was hourly expected.

LOUD is the Vale ! the Voice is up
With which she speaks when storms are gone,
A mighty unison of streams !
Of all her Voices, One !

met with it in two places among our mountains, in both of which I have since sought for it in vain.

Botanists will not, I hope, take it ill, if I caution them against carrying off, inconsiderately, rare and beautiful plants. This has often been done, particularly from Ingleborough and other mountains in Yorkshire, till the species have totally disappeared, to the great regret of lovers of nature living near the places where they grew.

See among the Poems on the ' Naming of Places,' No. vi., vol. i., p. 239.

Loud is the Vale ;—this inland Depth
In peace is roaring like the Sea ;
Yon star upon the mountain-top
Is listening quietly.

Sad was I, even to pain deprest,
Importunate and heavy load !¹
The Comforter hath found me here,
Upon this lonely road ;

10

And many thousands now are sad—
Wait the fulfilment of their fear ;
For he must die who is their stay,
Their glory disappear.

A Power is passing from the earth
To breathless Nature's dark abyss ;
But when the great and good depart
What is it more than this—

20

That Man, who is from God sent forth,
Doth yet again to God return ?—
Such ebb and flow must ever be,
Then wherefore should we mourn ?

1805

XI

INVOCATION TO THE EARTH

FEBRUARY, 1816

I

' Rest, rest, perturbèd Earth !
O rest, thou doleful Mother of Mankind !'
A Spirit sang in tones more plaintive than the wind :
' From régions where no evil thing has birth
I come—thy stains to wash away,
Thy cherished fetters to unbind,
And open thy sad eyes upon a milder day.
The Heavens are thronged with martyrs that have risen
From out thy noisome prison ;
The penal caverns groan
With tens of thousands rent from off the tree
Of hopeful life,—by battle's whirlwind blown
Into the deserts of Eternity.

10

¹ Importuna e grave salma.—MICHAEL ANGELO.

Unpitied havoc ! Victims unlamented !
 But not on high, where madness is resented,
 And murder causes some sad tears to flow,
 Though, from the widely-sweeping blow,
 The choirs of Angels spread, triumphantly augmented.

II

‘ False Parent of Mankind !
 Obdurate, proud, and blind, 20
 I sprinkle thee with soft celestial dews,
 Thy lost, maternal heart to re-infuse !
 Scattering this far-fetched moisture from my wings,
 Upon the act a blessing I implore,
 Of which the rivers in their secret springs,
 The rivers stained so oft with human gore,
 Are conscious ;—may the like return no more !
 May Discord—for a Seraph’s care
 Shall be attended with a bolder prayer—
 May she, who once disturbed the seats of bliss 30
 These mortal spheres above,
 Be chained for ever to the black abyss !
 And thou, O rescued Earth, by peace and love,
 And merciful desires, thy sanctity approve !’

The Spirit ended his mysterious rite,
 And the pure vision closed in darkness infinite,
1816

XII

LINES

WRITTEN ON A BLANK LEAF IN A COPY OF THE AUTHOR’S POEM
 ‘ THE EXCURSION,’ UPON HEARING OF THE DEATH OF THE
 LATE VICAR OF KENDAL

TO public notice, with reluctance strong,
 Did I deliver this unfinished Song ;
 Yet for one happy issue ;—and I look
 With self-congratulation on the Book
 Which pious, learned, MURFITT saw and read ;—
 Upon my thoughts his saintly Spirit fed ;
 He conned the new-born Lay with grateful heart—
 Foreboding not how soon he must depart ;
 Unweeting that to him the joy was given 9
 Which good men take with them from earth to heaven.
Nov. 13, 1814

XIII

ELEGIAC STANZAS

(ADDRESSED TO SIR G. H. B. UPON THE DEATH OF HIS
SISTER-IN-LAW)

FOR a dirge ! But why complain ?
Ask rather a triumphal strain
When FERMOR's race is run ;
A garland of immortal boughs
To twine around the Christian's brows,
Whose glorious work is done.

We pay a high and holy debt ;
No tears of passionate regret
Shall stain this votive lay ;
Ill-worthy, Beaumont ! were the grief
That flings itself on wild relief
When Saints have passed away.

10

Sad doom, at Sorrow's shrine to kneel,
For ever covetous to feel,
And impotent to bear !
Such once was hers—to think and think
On severed love, and only sink
From anguish to despair !

But nature to its inmost part
Faith had refined ; and to her heart
A peaceful cradle given :
Calm as the dew-drop's, free to rest
Within a breeze-fanned rose's breast
Till it exhales to Heaven.

20

Was ever Spirit that could bend
So graciously ?—that could descend,
Another's need to suit,
So promptly from her lofty throne ?—
In works of love, in these alone,
How restless, how minute !

30

Pale was her hue ; yet mortal cheek
Ne'er kindled with a livelier streak
When aught had suffered wrong,—
When aught that breathes had felt a wound ;
Such look the Oppressor might confound,
However proud and strong.

But hushed be every thought that springs
 From out the bitterness of things ;
 Her quiet is secure ;
 No thorns can pierce her tender feet, 40
 Whose life was, like the violet, sweet,
 As climbing jasmine, pure—

As snowdrop on an infant's grave,
 Or lily heaving with the wave
 That feeds it and defends ;
 As Vesper, ere the star hath kissed
 The mountain top, or breathed the mist
 That from the vale ascends.

Thou takest not away, O Death !
 Thou strikest—absence perisheth, 50
 Indifference is no more ;
 The future brightens on our sight ;
 For on the past hath fallen a light
 That tempts us to adore.

Probably Dec. 1824

XIV

ELEGIAC MUSINGS

IN THE GROUNDS OF COLEORTON HALL, THE SEAT OF THE LATE
 SIR G. H. BEAUMONT, BART.

IN these grounds stands the Parish Church, wherein is a mural monument bearing an Inscription which, in deference to the earnest request of the deceased, is confined to name, dates, and these words:—‘Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord!’

WITH copious eulogy in prose or rhyme
 Graven on the tomb we struggle against Time,
 Alas, how feebly ! but our feelings rise
 And still we struggle when a good man dies.
 Such offering BEAUMONT dreaded and forbade,
 A spirit meek in self-abasement clad.
 Yet *here* at least, though few have numbered days
 That shunned so modestly the light of praise,
 His graceful manners, and the temperate ray 10
 Of that arch fancy which would round him play,
 Brightening a converse never known to swerve
 From courtesy and delicate reserve ;
 That sense, the bland philosophy of life,
 Which checked discussion ere it warmed to strife ;

Those rare accomplishments, and varied powers,
 Might have their record among sylvan bowers.
 Oh, fled for ever! vanished like a blast
 That shook the leaves in myriads as it passed;—
 Gone from this world of earth, air, sea, and sky,
 From all its spirit-moving imagery, 20
 Intensely studied with a painter's eye,
 A poet's heart; and, for congenial view,
 Portrayed with happiest pencil, not untrue
 To common recognitions while the line
 Flowed in a course of sympathy divine;—
 Oh! severed, too abruptly, from delights
 That all the seasons shared with equal rights;—
 Rapt in the grace of undismantled age,
 From soul-felt music, and the treasured page
 Lit by that evening lamp which loved to shed 30
 Its mellow lustre round thy honoured head;
 While Friends beheld thee give with eye, voice, mien,
 More than theatric force to Shakspeare's scene;—
 If thou hast heard me—if thy Spirit know
 Aught of these bowers and whence their pleasures flow;
 If things in our remembrance held so dear,
 And thoughts and projects fondly cherished here,
 To thy exalted nature only seem
 Time's vanities, light fragments of earth's dream—
 Rebuke us not!—The mandate is obeyed 40
 That said, 'Let praise be mute where I am laid';
 The holier deprecation, given in trust
 To the cold marble, waits upon thy dust;
 Yet have we found how slowly genuine grief
 From *silent* admiration wins relief.
 Too long abashed thy Name is like a rose
 That doth 'within itself its sweetness close';
 A drooping daisy changed into a cup
 In which her bright-eyed beauty is shut up.
 Within these groves, where still are flitting by 50
 Shades of the Past, oft noticed with a sigh,
 Shall stand a votive Tablet, haply free,
 When towers and temples fall, to speak of Thee!
 If sculptured emblems of our mortal doom
 Recall not there the wisdom of the Tomb,
 Green ivy risen from out the cheerful earth
 Will fringe the lettered stone; and herbs spring forth,
 Whose fragrance, by soft dews and rain unbound,
 Shall penetrate the heart without a wound;
 While truth and love their purposes fulfil, 60
 Commemorating genius, talent, skill,

That could not lie concealed where Thou wert known ;
 Thy virtues *He* must judge, and *He* alone,
 The God upon whose mercy they are thrown.

Nov. 1830

XV

WRITTEN AFTER THE DEATH OF
 CHARLES LAMB

TO a good Man of most dear memory
 This Stone is sacred. Here he lies apart
 From the great city where he first drew breath,
 Was reared and taught ; and humbly earned his bread,
 To the strict labours of the merchant's desk
 By duty chained. Not seldom did those tasks
 Tease, and the thought of time so spent depress,
 His spirit, but the recompense was high ;
 Firm Independence, Bounty's rightful sire ;
 Affections, warm as sunshine, free as air ; 10
 And when the precious hours of leisure came,
 Knowledge and wisdom, gained from converse sweet
 With books, or while he ranged the crowded streets
 With a keen eye, and overflowing heart :
 So genius triumphed over seeming wrong,
 And poured out truth in works by thoughtful love
 Inspired—works potent over smiles and tears.
 And as round mountain-tops the lightning plays,
 Thus innocently sported, breaking forth 20
 As from a cloud of some grave sympathy,
 Humour and wild instinctive wit, and all
 The vivid flashes of his spoken words.
 From the most gentle creature nursed in fields
 Had been derived the name he bore—a name,
 Wherever Christian altars have been raised,
 Hallowed to meekness and to innocence ;
 And if in him meekness at times gave way,
 Provoked out of herself by troubles strange,
 Many and strange, that hung about his life ;
 Still, at the centre of his being, lodged 30
 A soul by resignation sanctified :
 And if too often, self-reproached, he felt
 That innocence belongs not to our kind,
 A power that never ceased to abide in him,
 Charity, 'mid the multitude of sins
 That she can cover, left not his exposed

To an unforgiving judgment from just Heaven.
O, he was good, if e'er a good Man lived !

From a reflecting mind and sorrowing heart
Those simple lines flowed with an earnest wish, 40
Though but a doubting hope, that they might serve
Fitly to guard the precious dust of him
Whose virtues called them forth. That aim is missed ;
For much that truth most urgently required
Had from a faltering pen been asked in vain :
Yet, haply, on the printed page received,
The imperfect record, there, may stand unblamed
As long as verse of mine shall breathe the air
Of memory, or see the light of love.

Thou wert a scorner of the fields, my Friend, 50
But more in show than truth ; and from the fields,
And from the mountains, to thy rural grave
Transported, my soothed spirit hovers o'er
Its green untrodden turf, and blowing flowers ;
And taking up a voice shall speak (tho' still
Awed by the theme's peculiar sanctity
Which words less free presumed not even to touch)
Of that fraternal love, whose heaven-lit lamp
From infancy, through manhood, to the last
Of threescore years, and to thy latest hour, 60
Burnt on with ever-strengthening light, enshrined
Within thy bosom.

' Wonderful ' hath been
The love established between man and man,
' Passing the love of women ' ; and between
Man and his help-mate in fast wedlock joined
Through God, is raised a spirit and soul of love
Without whose blissful influence Paradise
Had been no Paradise ; and earth were now
A waste where creatures bearing human form,
Direst of savage beasts, would roam in fear, 70
Joyless and comfortless. Our days glide on ;
And let him grieve who cannot choose but grieve
That he hath been an Elm without his Vine,
And her bright dower of clustering charities,
That, round his trunk and branches, might have clung
Enriching and adorning. Unto thee,
Not so enriched, not so adorned, to thee
Was given (say rather thou of later birth
Wert given to her) a Sister—'tis a word
Timidly uttered, for she *lives*, the meek, 80

The self-restraining, and the ever-kind ;
 In whom thy reason and intelligent heart
 Found—for all interests, hopes, and tender cares,
 All softening, humanising, hallowing powers,
 Whether withheld, or for her sake unsought—
 More than sufficient recompense !

Her love
 (What weakness prompts the voice to tell it here ?)
 Was as the love of mothers ; and when years,
 Lifting the boy to man's estate, had called
 The long-protected to assume the part 90
 Of a protector, the first filial tie
 Was undissolved ; and, in or out of sight,
 Remained imperishably interwoven
 With life itself. Thus, 'mid a shifting world,
 Did they together testify of time
 And season's difference—a double tree
 With two collateral stems sprung from one root ;
 Such were they—such thro' life they *might* have been
 In union, in partition only such ;
 Otherwise wrought the will of the Most High ; 100
 Yet, thro' all visitations and all trials,
 Still they were faithful ; like two vessels launched
 From the same beach one ocean to explore
 With mutual help, and sailing—to their league
 True, as inexorable winds, or bars
 Floating or fixed of polar ice, allow.

But turn we rather, let my spirit turn
 With thine, O silent and invisible Friend !
 To those dear intervals, nor rare nor brief,
 When reunited, and by choice withdrawn 110
 From miscellaneous converse, ye were taught
 That the remembrance of foregone distress,
 And the worse fear of future ill (which oft
 Doth hang around it, as a sickly child
 Upon its mother) may be both alike
 Disarmed of power to unsettle present good
 So prized, and things inward and outward held
 In such an even balance, that the heart
 Acknowledges God's grace, his mercy feels,
 And in its depth of gratitude is still. 120

O gift divine of quiet sequestration !
 The hermit, exercised in prayer and praise,
 And feeding daily on the hope of heaven,
 Is happy in his vow, and fondly cleaves

To life-long singleness; but happier far
 Was to your souls, and, to the thoughts of others,
 A thousand times more beautiful appeared,
 Your *dual* loneliness. The sacred tie
 Is broken; yet why grieve? for Time but holds
 His moiety in trust, till Joy shall lead
 To the blest world where parting is unknown.

130

Nov. 1835

XVI

EXTEMPORE EFFUSION UPON THE
 DEATH OF JAMES HOGG

WHEN first, descending from the moorlands,
 I saw the Stream of Yarrow glide
 Along a bare and open valley,
 The Ettrick Shepherd was my guide.

When last along its banks I wandered,
 Through groves that had begun to shed
 Their golden leaves upon the pathways,
 My steps the Border-minstrel led.

The mighty Minstrel breathes no longer,
 'Mid mouldering ruins low he lies;
 And death upon the braes of Yarrow,
 Has closed the Shepherd-poet's eyes:

10

Nor has the rolling year twice measured,
 From sign to sign, its steadfast course,
 Since every mortal power of Coleridge
 Was frozen at its marvellous source;

The rapt One, of the godlike forehead,
 The heaven-eyed creature sleeps in earth:
 And Lamb, the frolic and the gentle,
 Has vanished from his lonely hearth.

20

Like clouds that rake the mountain-summits,
 Or waves that own no curbing hand,
 How fast has brother followed brother,
 From sunshine to the sunless land!

Yet I, whose lids from infant slumber
 Were earlier raised, remain to hear
 A timid voice, that asks in whispers,
 'Who next will drop and disappear?'

Our haughty life is crowned with darkness,
Like London with its own black wreath, 30
On which with thee, O Crabbe! forth-looking,
I gazed from Hampstead's breezy heath.

As if but yesterday departed,
Thou too art gone before ; but why,
O'er ripe fruit, seasonably gathered,
Should frail survivors heave a sigh ?

Mourn rather for that holy Spirit,
Sweet as the spring, as ocean deep ;
For Her who, ere her summer faded,
Has sunk into a breathless sleep.

No more of old romantic sorrows,
For slaughtered Youth or love-lorn Maid !
With sharper grief is Yarrow smitten,
And Ettrick mourns with her their Poet dead.

XVII

INSCRIPTION

FOR A MONUMENT IN CROSTHWAITE CHURCH, IN THE
VALE OF KESWICK

YE vales and hills whose beauty hither drew
The poet's steps, and fixed him here, on you
His eyes have closed ! And ye, lov'd books, no more
Shall Southey feed upon your precious lore,
To works that ne'er shall forfeit their renown,
Adding immortal labours of his own—
Whether he traced historic truth, with zeal
For the State's guidance, or the Church's weal,
Or Fancy, disciplined by studious art,
Inform'd his pen, or wisdom of the heart,
Or judgments sanctioned in the Patriot's mind
By reverence for the rights of all mankind.
Wide were his aims, yet in no human breast
Could private feelings meet for holier rest.
His joys, his griefs, have vanished like a cloud
From Skiddaw's top ; but he to heaven was vowed
Through his industrious life, and Christian faith
Calmed in his soul the fear of change and death.

ODE

INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY
FROM RECOLLECTIONS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD

The Child is Father of the Man ;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.

I

THERE was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
The earth, and every common sight,
To me did seem
Apparelled in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.
It is not now as it hath been of yore ;—
Turn wheresoe'er I may,
By night or day,
The things which I have seen I now can see no more.

II

The Rainbow comes and goes, 10
And lovely is the Rose,
The Moon doth with delight
Look round her when the heavens are bare,
Waters on a starry night
Are beautiful and fair ;
The sunshine is a glorious birth ;
But yet I know, where'er I go,
That there hath past away a glory from the earth.

III

Now, while the birds thus sing a joyous song,
And while the young lambs bound 20
As to the tabor's sound,
To me alone there came a thought of grief :
A timely utterance gave that thought relief,
And I again am strong :

The cataracts blow their trumpets from the steep;
 No more shall grief of mine the season wrong;
 I hear the Echoes through the mountains throng,
 The Winds come to me from the fields of sleep,

And all the earth is gay;

Land and sea

Give themselves up to jollity,

And with the heart of May

Doth every Beast keep holiday;—

Thou Child of Joy,

Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts, thou happy
 Shepherd-boy!

IV

Ye blessèd Creatures, I have heard the call

Ye to each other make; I see

The heavens laugh with you in your jubilee;

My heart is at your festival,

My head hath its coronal,

The fulness of your bliss, I feel—I feel it all.

Oh evil day! if I were sullen

While Earth herself is adorning,

This sweet May-morning,

And the Children are culling

On every side,

In a thousand valleys far and wide,

Fresh flowers; while the sun shines warm,

And the Babe leaps up on his Mother's arm:—

I hear, I hear, with joy I hear!

—But there's a Tree, of many, one,

A single Field which I have looked upon,

Both of them speak of something that is gone:

The Pansy at my feet

Doth the same tale repeat:

Whither is fled the visionary gleam?

Where is it now, the glory and the dream?

V

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:

The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,

Hath had elsewhere its setting,

And cometh from afar:

Not in entire forgetfulness,

And not in utter nakedness,

But trailing clouds of glory do we come

From God, who is our home:

Heaven lies about us in our infancy !
 Shades of the prison-house begin to close
 Upon the growing Boy,
 But He beholds the light, and whence it flows,
 He sees it in his joy ;
 The Youth, who daily farther from the east
 Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,
 And by the vision splendid
 Is on his way attended ;
 At length the Man perceives it die away,
 And fade into the light of common day.

70

VI

Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own ;
 Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,
 And, even with something of a Mother's mind,
 And no unworthy aim,
 The homely Nurse doth all she can
 To make her Foster-child, her Inmate Man,
 Forget the glories he hath known,
 And that imperial palace whence he came.

80

VII

Behold the Child among his new-born blisses,
 A six years' Darling of a pigmy size !
 See, where 'mid work of his own hand he lies,
 Fretted by sallies of his mother's kisses,
 With light upon him from his father's eyes !
 See, at his feet, some little plan or chart,
 Some fragment from his dream of human life,
 Shaped by himself with newly-learned art ;
 A wedding or a festival,
 A mourning or a funeral ;
 And this hath now his heart,
 And unto this he frames his song :
 Then will he fit his tongue
 To dialogues of business, love, or strife ;
 But it will not be long
 Ere this be thrown aside,
 And with new joy and pride
 The little Actor cons another part ;
 Filling from time to time his 'humorous stage'
 With all the Persons, down to palsied Age,
 That Life brings with her in her equipage ;
 As if his whole vocation
 Were endless imitation.

90

100

VIII

Thou, whose exterior semblance doth belie
 Thy Soul's immensity;
 Thou best Philosopher, who yet dost keep 110
 Thy heritage, thou Eye among the blind,
 That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal deep,
 Haunted for ever by the eternal mind,—
 Mighty Prophet! Seer blest!
 On whom those truths do rest,
 Which we are toiling all our lives to find,
 In darkness lost, the darkness of the grave;
 Thou, over whom thy Immortality
 Broods like the Day, a Master o'er a Slave,
 A Presence which is not to be put by; 120
 Thou little Child, yet glorious in the might
 Of heaven-born freedom on thy being's height,
 Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke
 The years to bring the inevitable yoke,
 Thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife?
 Full soon thy Soul shall have her earthly freight,
 And custom lie upon thee with a weight,
 Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life!

IX

 O joy! that in our embers
 Is something that doth live, 130
 That nature yet remembers
 What was so fugitive!
 The thought of our past years in me doth breed
 Perpetual benediction: not indeed
 For that which is most worthy to be blest;
 Delight and liberty, the simple creed
 Of Childhood, whether busy or at rest,
 With new-fledged hope still fluttering in his breast:—
 Not for these I raise
 The song of thanks and praise; 140
 But for those obstinate questionings
 Of sense and outward things,
 Fallings from us, vanishings;
 Blank misgivings of a Creature
 Moving about in worlds not realised,
 High instincts before which our mortal Nature
 Did tremble like a guilty Thing surprised:
 But for those first affections,
 Those shadowy recollections,

Which, be they what they may, 150
 Are yet the fountain-light of all our day,
 Are yet a master-light of all our seeing ;
 Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make
 Our noisy years seem moments in the being
 Of the eternal Silence: truths that wake,
 To perish never ;
 Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavour,
 Nor Man nor Boy,
 Nor all that is at enmity with joy,
 Can utterly abolish or destroy ! 160
 Hence in a season of calm weather
 Though inland far we be,
 Our Souls have sight of that immortal sea
 Which brought us hither,
 Can in a moment travel thither,
 And see the Children sport upon the shore,
 And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

X

Then sing, ye Birds, sing, sing a joyous song !
 And let the young Lambs bound
 As to the tabor's sound ! 170
 We in thought will join your throng,
 Ye that pipe and ye that play,
 Ye that through your hearts to-day
 Feel the gladness of the May !
 What though the radiance which was once so bright
 Be now for ever taken from my sight,
 Though nothing can bring back the hour
 Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower ;
 We will grieve not, rather find
 Strength in what remains behind ; 180
 In the primal sympathy
 Which having been must ever be ;
 In the soothing thoughts that spring
 Out of human suffering ;
 In the faith that looks through death,
 In years that bring the philosophic mind.

XI

And O, ye Fountains, Meadows, Hills, and Groves,
 Forebode not any severing of our loves !
 Yet in my heart of hearts I feel your might ;
 I only have relinquished one delight 190
 To live beneath your more habitual sway.

I love the Brooks which down their channels fret,
Even more than when I tripped lightly as they ;
The innocent brightness of a new-born Day

Is lovely yet ;

The Clouds that gather round the setting sun
Do take a sober colouring from an eye
That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality ;
Another race hath been, and other palms are won.
Thanks to the human heart by which we live,
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,
To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

200

1802-1806

THE EXCURSION

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
WILLIAM, EARL OF LONSDALE, K.G.
ETC. ETC.

OFF, through thy fair domains, illustrious Peer !
In youth I roamed, on youthful pleasures bent ;
And mused in rocky cell or sylvan tent,
Beside swift-flowing Lowther's current clear.
—Now, by thy care befriended, I appear
Before thee, LONSDALE, and this Work present,
A token (may it prove a monument !)
Of high respect and gratitude sincere.
Gladly would I have waited till my task
Had reached its close ; but Life is insecure,
And Hope full oft fallacious as a dream :
Therefore, for what is here produced, I ask
Thy favour ; trusting that thou wilt not deem
The offering, though imperfect, premature.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

RYDAL MOUNT, WESTMORELAND,
July 29, 1814.

PREFACE TO THE EDITION OF 1814

THE Title-page announces that this is only a portion of a poem ; and the Reader must be here apprised that it belongs to the second part of a long and laborious Work, which is to consist of three parts.—The Author will candidly acknowledge that, if the first of these had been completed, and in such a manner as to satisfy his own mind, he should have preferred the natural order of publication, and have given that to the world first ; but, as the second division of the Work was designed to refer more to passing events, and to an existing state of things, than the others were meant to do, more continuous exertion was naturally bestowed upon it, and greater progress made here than in the rest of the poem ; and as this part does not depend upon the preceding, to a degree which will materially injure its own peculiar interest, the Author, complying with the earnest entreaties of some valued Friends, presents the following pages to the Public.

It may be proper to state whence the poem, of which 'The Excursion' is a part, derives its Title of *THE RECLUSE*.—Several years ago, when the Author retired to his native mountains, with the hope of being enabled to construct a literary Work that might live, it was a reasonable thing that he should take a review of his own mind, and examine how far Nature and Education had qualified him for such employment. As subsidiary to this preparation, he undertook to record, in verse, the origin and progress of his own powers, as far as he was acquainted with them. That Work, addressed to a dear Friend, most distinguished for his knowledge and genius, and to whom the Author's Intellect is deeply indebted, has been long finished; and the result of the investigation which gave rise to it was a determination to compose a philosophical poem, containing views of Man, Nature, and Society; and to be entitled, 'The Recluse'; as having for its principal subject the sensations and opinions of a poet living in retirement.—The preparatory poem is biographical, and conducts the history of the Author's mind to the point when he was emboldened to hope that his faculties were sufficiently matured for entering upon the arduous labour which he had proposed to himself; and the two Works have the same kind of relation to each other, if he may so express himself, as the ante-chapel has to the body of a gothic church. Continuing this allusion, he may be permitted to add, that his minor Pieces, which have been long before the Public, when they shall be properly arranged, will be found by the attentive Reader to have such connection with the main Work as may give them claim to be likened to the little cells, oratories, and sepulchral recesses, ordinarily included in those edifices.

The Author would not have deemed himself justified in saying, upon this occasion, so much of performances either unfinished, or unpublished, if he had not thought that the labour bestowed by him upon what he has heretofore and now laid before the Public, entitled him to candid attention for such a statement as he thinks necessary to throw light upon his endeavours to please and, he would hope, to benefit his countrymen.—Nothing further need be added, than that the first and third parts of 'The Recluse' will consist chiefly of meditations in the Author's own person; and that in the intermediate part ('The Excursion') the intervention of characters speaking is employed, and something of a dramatic form adopted.

It is not the Author's intention formally to announce a system: it was more animating to him to proceed in a different course; and if he shall succeed in conveying to the mind clear thoughts, lively images, and strong feelings, the Reader will have no difficulty in extracting the system for himself. And in the meantime the following passage, taken from the conclusion of the first book of 'The Recluse,' may be acceptable as a kind of *Prospectus* of the design and scope of the whole Poem.

'On Man, on Nature, and on Human Life,
 Musing in solitude, I oft perceive
 Fair trains of imagery before me rise,
 Accompanied by feelings of delight
 Pure, or with no unpleasing sadness mixed;
 And I am conscious of affecting thoughts

And dear remembrances, whose presence soothes
 Or elevates the Mind, intent to weigh
 The good and evil of our mortal state.
 —To these emotions, whencesoe'er they come, 10
 Whether from breath of outward circumstance,
 Or from the Soul—an impulse to herself—
 I would give utterance in numerous verse.
 Of Truth, of Grandeur, Beauty, Love, and Hope,
 And melancholy Fear subdued by Faith;
 Of blessed consolations in distress;
 Of moral strength, and intellectual Power;
 Of joy in widest commonalty spread;
 Of the individual Mind that keeps her own
 Inviolatè retirement, subject there. 20
 To Conscience only, and the law supreme
 Of that Intelligence which governs all—
 I sing:—"fit audience let me find though few!"

'So prayed, more gaining than he asked, the Bard—
 In holiest mood. Urania, I shall need
 Thy guidance, or a greater Muse, if such
 Descend to earth or dwell in highest heaven!
 For I must tread on shadowy ground, must sink
 Deep—and, aloft ascending, breathe in worlds 30
 To which the heaven of heavens is but a veil.
 All strength—all terror, single or in bands,
 That ever was put forth in personal form—
 Jehovah—with his thunder, and the choir
 Of shouting Angels, and the empyreal thrones—
 I pass them unalarmed. Not Chaos, not
 The darkest pit of lowest Erebus,
 Nor aught of blinder vacancy, scooped out
 By help of dreams—can breed such fear and awe
 As fall upon us often when we look
 Into our Minds, into the Mind of Man— 40
 My haunt, and the main region of my song.
 —Beauty—a living Presence of the earth,
 Surpassing the most fair ideal Forms
 Which craft of delicate Spirits hath composed
 From earth's materials—waits upon my steps;
 Pitches her tents before me as I move,
 An hourly neighbour. Paradise, and groves
 Elysian, Fortunate Fields—like those of old
 Sought in the Atlantic Main—why should they be 50
 A history only of departed things,
 Or a mere fiction of what never was?
 For the discerning intellect of Man,
 When wedded to this goodly universe
 In love and holy passion, shall find these
 A simple produce of the common day.
 —I, long before the blissful hour arrives,
 Would chant, in lonely peace, the spousal verse
 Of this great consummation:—and, by words
 Which speak of nothing more than what we are,
 Would I arouse the sensual from their sleep 60
 Of Death, and win the vacant and the vain
 To noble raptures; while my voice proclaims
 How exquisitely the individual Mind
 (And the progressive powers perhaps no less
 Of the whole species) to the external World
 Is fitted:—and how exquisitely, too—
 Theme this but little heard of among men—
 The external World is fitted to the Mind;
 And the creation (by no lower name

Can it be called) which they with blended might 70
 Accomplish :—this is our high argument.
 —Such grateful haunts foregoing, if I oft
 Must turn elsewhere—to travel near the tribes
 And fellowships of men, and see ill sights
 Of madding passions mutually inflamed ;
 Must hear Humanity in fields and groves
 Pipe solitary anguish ; or must hang
 Brooding above the fierce confederate storm
 Of sorrow, barricadoed evermore
 Within the walls of cities—may these sounds 80
 Have their authentic comment ; that even these
 Hearing, I be not downcast or forlorn !—
 Descend, prophetic Spirit ! that inspir'st
 The human Soul of universal earth,
 Dreaming on things to come ; and dost possess
 A metropolitan temple in the hearts
 Of mighty Poets : upon me bestow
 A gift of genuine insight ; that my Song
 With star-like virtue in its place may shine,
 Shedding benignant influence, and secure, 90
 Itself, from all malevolent effect
 Of those mutations that extend their sway
 Throughout the nether sphere !—And if with this
 I mix more lowly matter ; with the thing
 Contemplated, describe the Mind and Man
 Contemplating ; and who, and what he was—
 The transitory Being that beheld
 This Vision ; when and where, and how he lived ;—
 Be not this labour useless. If such theme
 May sort with highest objects, then—dread Power ! 100
 Whose gracious favour is the primal source
 Of all illumination,—may my Life
 Express the image of a better time,
 More wise desires, and simpler manners ;—nurse
 My Heart in genuine freedom :—all pure thoughts
 Be with me ;—so shall thy unfailing love
 Guide, and support, and cheer me to the end !'

THE EXCURSION

BOOK FIRST

THE WANDERER

ARGUMENT

A SUMMER forenoon.—The Author reaches a ruined Cottage upon a Common, and there meets with a revered Friend, the Wanderer, of whose education and course of life he gives an account.—The Wanderer, while resting under the shade of the Trees that surround the Cottage, relates the History of its last Inhabitant.

'T WAS summer, and the sun had mounted high :
 Southward the landscape indistinctly glared
 Through a pale steam ; but all the northern downs,
 In clearest air ascending, showed far off
 A surface dappled o'er with shadows flung
 From brooding clouds ; shadows that lay in spots
 Determined and unmoved, with steady beams
 Of bright and pleasant sunshine interposed ;
 To him most pleasant who on soft cool moss
 Extends his careless limbs along the front 10
 Of some huge cave, whose rocky ceiling casts
 A twilight of its own, an ample shade,
 Where the wren warbles, while the dreaming man,
 Half conscious of the soothing melody,
 With side-long eye looks out upon the scene,
 By power of that impending covert thrown
 To finer distance. Mine was at that hour
 Far other lot, yet with good hope that soon
 Under a shade as grateful I should find
 Rest, and be welcomed there to livelier joy. 20
 Across a bare wide Common I was toiling
 With languid steps that by the slippery turf
 Were baffled ; nor could my weak arm disperse
 The host of insects gathering round my face,
 And ever with me as I paced along.

Upon that open moorland stood a grove,
 The wished-for port to which my course was bound.

Thither I came, and there, amid the gloom
Spread by a brotherhood of lofty elms,
Appeared a roofless Hut ; four naked walls 30
That stared upon each other !—I looked round,
And to my wish and to my hope espied
The Friend I sought ; a Man of reverend age,
But stout and hale, for travel unimpaired.
There was he seen upon the cottage-bench,
Recumbent in the shade, as if asleep ;
An iron-pointed staff lay at his side.

Him had I marked the day before—alone
And stationed in the public way, with face
Turned toward the sun then setting, while that staff 40
Afforded, to the figure of the man
Detained for contemplation or repose,
Graceful support ; his countenance as he stood
Was hidden from my view, and he remained
Unrecognised ; but, stricken by the sight,
With slackened footsteps I advanced, and soon
A glad congratulation we exchanged
At such unthought-of meeting.—For the night
We parted, nothing willingly ; and now
He by appointment waited for me here, 50
Under the covert of these clustering elms.

We were tried Friends : amid a pleasant vale,
In the antique market-village where was passed
My school-time, an apartment he had owned,
To which at intervals the Wanderer drew,
And found a kind of home or harbour there.
He loved me ; from a swarm of rosy boys
Singled out me, as he in sport would say,
For my grave looks, too thoughtful for my years.
As I grew up, it was my best delight 60
To be his chosen comrade. Many a time,
On holidays, we rambled through the woods :
We sate—we walked ; he pleased me with report
Of things which he had seen ; and often touched
Abstrusest matter, reasonings of the mind
Turned inward ; or at my request would sing
Old songs, the product of his native hills ;
A skilful distribution of sweet sounds,
Feeding the soul, and eagerly imbibed
As cool refreshing water, by the care 70
Of the industrious husbandman, diffused
Through a parched meadow-ground, in time of drought.

Still deeper welcome found his pure discourse :
 How precious when in riper days I learned
 To weigh with care his words, and to rejoice
 In the plain presence of his dignity !

Oh ! many are the Poets that are sown
 By Nature ; men endowed with highest gifts,
 The vision and the faculty divine ;
 Yet wanting the accomplishment of verse, 80
 (Which, in the docile season of their youth,
 It was denied them to acquire, through lack
 Of culture and the inspiring aid of books,
 Or haply by a temper too severe,
 Or a nice backwardness afraid of shame)
 Nor having e'er, as life advanced, been led
 By circumstance to take unto the height
 The measure of themselves, these favoured Beings,
 All but a scattered few, live out their time,
 Husbanding that which they possess within, 90
 And go to the grave, unthought of. Strongest minds
 Are often those of whom the noisy world
 Hears least ; else surely this Man had not left
 His graces unrevealed and unproclaimed.
 But, as the mind was filled with inward light,
 So not without distinction had he lived,
 Beloved and honoured—far as he was known.
 And some small portion of his eloquent speech,
 And something that may serve to set in view
 The feeling pleasures of his loneliness, 100
 His observations, and the thoughts his mind
 Had dealt with—I will here record in verse ;
 Which, if with truth it correspond, and sink
 Or rise as venerable Nature leads,
 The high and tender Muses shall accept
 With gracious smile, deliberately pleased,
 And listening Time reward with sacred praise.

Among the hills of Athol he was born ;
 Where, on a small hereditary farm,
 An unproductive slip of rugged ground, 110
 His Parents, with their numerous offspring, dwelt ;
 A virtuous household, though exceeding poor !
 Pure livers were they all, austere and grave,
 And fearing God ; the very children taught
 Stern self-respect, a reverence for God's word,
 And an habitual piety, maintained
 With strictness scarcely known on English ground.

From his sixth year, the Boy of whom I speak,
 In summer, tended cattle on the hills;
 But, through the inclement and the perilous days 120
 Of long-continuing winter, he repaired,
 Equipped with satchel, to a school, that stood
 Sole building on a mountain's dreary edge,
 Remote from view of city spire, or sound
 Of minster clock! From that bleak tenement
 He, many an evening, to his distant home
 In solitude returning, saw the hills
 Grow larger in the darkness; all alone
 Beheld the stars come out above his head,
 And travelled through the wood, with no one near 130
 To whom he might confess the things he saw.

So the foundations of his mind were laid.
 In such communion, not from terror free,
 While yet a child, and long before his time,
 Had he perceived the presence and the power
 Of greatness; and deep feelings had impressed
 So vividly great objects that they lay
 Upon his mind like substances, whose presence
 Perplexed the bodily sense. He had received 140
 A precious gift; for, as he grew in years,
 With these impressions would he still compare
 All his remembrances, thoughts, shapes, and forms;
 And, being still unsatisfied with aught
 Of dimmer character, he thence attained
 An active power to fasten images
 Upon his brain; and on their pictured lines
 Intensely brooded, even till they acquired
 The liveliness of dreams. Nor did he fail,
 While yet a child, with a child's eagerness
 Incessantly to turn his ear and eye 150
 On all things which the moving seasons brought
 To feed such appetite—nor this alone
 Appeased his yearning:—in the after-day
 Of boyhood, many an hour in caves forlorn,
 And 'mid the hollow depths of naked crags
 He sate, and even in their fixed lineaments,
 Or from the power of a peculiar eye,
 Or by creative feeling overborne,
 Or by predominance of thought oppressed,
 Even in their fixed and steady lineaments 160
 He traced an ebbing and a flowing mind,
 Expression ever varying!

Thus informed,

He had small need of books ; for many a tale
 Traditionary round the mountains hung,
 And many a legend, peopling the dark woods,
 Nourished Imagination in her growth,
 And gave the Mind that apprehensive power
 By which she is made quick to recognise
 The moral properties and scope of things.
 But eagerly he read, and read again, 170
 Whate'er the minister's old shelf supplied ;
 The life and death of martyrs, who sustained,
 With will inflexible, those fearful pangs
 Triumphantly displayed in records left
 Of persecution, and the Covenant—times
 Whose echo rings through Scotland to this hour !
 And there, by lucky hap, had been preserved
 A straggling volume, torn and incomplete,
 That left half-told the preternatural tale,
 Romance of giants, chronicle of fiends, 180
 Profuse in garniture of wooden cuts
 Strange and uncouth ; dire faces, figures dire,
 Sharp-kneed, sharp-elbowed, and lean-ankled too,
 With long and ghostly shanks—forms which once seen
 Could never be forgotten !

In his heart,

Where Fear sate thus, a cherished visitant,
 Was wanting yet the pure delight of love
 By sound diffused, or by the breathing air,
 Or by the silent looks of happy things,
 Or flowing from the universal face 190
 Of earth and sky. But he had felt the power
 Of Nature, and already was prepared,
 By his intense conceptions, to receive
 Deeply the lesson deep of love which he,
 Whom Nature, by whatever means, has taught
 To feel intensely, cannot but receive.

Such was the Boy—but for the growing Youth
 What soul was his, when, from the naked top
 Of some bold headland, he beheld the sun
 Rise up, and bathe the world in light ! He looked—
 Ocean and earth, the solid frame of earth 201
 And ocean's liquid mass, in gladness lay
 Beneath him :—Far and wide the clouds were touched,
 And in their silent faces could he read
 Unutterable love. Sound needed none,
 Nor any voice of joy ; his spirit drank
 The spectacle : sensation, soul, and form,

All melted into him ; they swallowed up
 His animal being ; in them did he live,
 And by them did he live ; they were his life. 210
 In such access of mind, in such high hour
 Of visitation from the living God,
 Thought was not ; in enjoyment it expired.
 No thanks he breathed, he proffered no request ;
 Rapt into still communion that transcends
 The imperfect offices of prayer and praise,
 His mind was a thanksgiving to the power
 That made him ; it was blessedness and love !

A Herdsman on the lonely mountain-tops,
 Such intercourse was his, and in this sort 220
 Was his existence oftentimes *possessed*.
 O then how beautiful, how bright, appeared
 The written promise ! Early had he learned
 To reverence the volume that displays
 The mystery, the life which cannot die ;
 But in the mountains did he *feel* his faith.
 All things, responsive to the writing, there
 Breathed immortality, revolving life,
 And greatness still revolving ; infinite :
 There littleness was not ; the least of things 230
 Seemed infinite ; and there his spirit shaped
 Her prospects, nor did he believe,—he *saw*.
 What wonder if his being thus became
 Sublime and comprehensive ! Low desires,
 Low thoughts had there no place ; yet was his heart
 Lowly ; for he was meek in gratitude,
 Oft as he called those ecstasies to mind,
 And whence they flowed ; and from them he acquired
 Wisdom, which works thro' patience ; thence he
 learned
 In oft-recurring hours of sober thought 240
 To look on Nature with a humble heart,
 Self-questioned where it did not understand,
 And with a superstitious eye of love.

So passed the time ; yet to the nearest town
 He duly went with what small overplus
 His earnings might supply, and brought away
 The book that most had tempted his desires
 While at the stall he read. Among the hills
 He gazed upon that mighty orb of song,
 The divine Milton. Lore of different kind, 250
 The annual savings of a toilsome life,

His School-master supplied ; books that explain
 The purer elements of truth involved
 In lines and numbers, and, by charm severe,
 (Especially perceived where nature droops
 And feeling is suppressed) preserve the mind
 Busy in solitude and poverty.
 These occupations oftentimes deceived
 The listless hours, while in the hollow vale,
 Hollow and green, he lay on the green turf 260
 In pensive idleness. What could he do,
 Thus daily thirsting, in that lonesome life,
 With blind endeavours ? Yet, still uppermost,
 Nature was at his heart as if he felt,
 Though yet he knew not how, a wasting power
 In all things that from her sweet influence
 Might tend to wean him. Therefore with her hues,
 Her forms, and with the spirit of her forms,
 He clothed the nakedness of austere truth.
 While yet he lingered in the rudiments 270
 Of science, and among her simplest laws,
 His triangles—they were the stars of heaven,
 The silent stars ! Oft did he take delight
 To measure the altitude of some tall crag
 That is the eagle's birthplace, or some peak
 Familiar with forgotten years, that shows
 Inscribed upon its visionary sides,
 The history of many a winter storm,
 Or obscure records of the path of fire.

And thus before his eighteenth year was told, 280
 Accumulated feelings pressed his heart
 With still increasing weight ; he was o'erpowered
 By Nature ; by the turbulence subdued
 Of his own mind ; by mystery and hope,
 And the first virgin passion of a soul
 Communing with the glorious universe.
 Full often wished he that the winds might rage
 When they were silent : far more fondly now
 Than in his earlier season did he love
 Tempestuous nights—the conflict and the sounds 290
 That live in darkness. From his intellect
 And from the stillness of abstracted thought
 He asked repose ; and, failing oft to win
 The peace required, he scanned the laws of light
 Amid the roar of torrents, where they send
 From hollow clefts up to the clearer air
 A cloud of mist, that smitten by the sun

Varies its rainbow hues. But vainly thus,
And vainly by all other means, he strove
To mitigate the fever of his heart.

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In dreams, in study, and in ardent thought,
Thus was he reared ; much wanting to assist
The growth of intellect, yet gaining more,
And every moral feeling of his soul
Strengthened and braced, by breathing in content
The keen, the wholesome, air of poverty,
And drinking from the well of homely life.
—But, from past liberty, and tried restraints,
He now was summoned to select the course
Of humble industry that promised best
To yield him no unworthy maintenance.
Urged by his Mother, he essayed to teach
A village-school—but wandering thoughts were then
A misery to him ; and the Youth resigned
A task he was unable to perform.

310

That stern yet kindly Spirit, who constrains
The Savoyard to quit his naked rocks,
The free-born Swiss to leave his narrow vales,
(Spirit attached to regions mountainous
Like their own steadfast clouds) did now impel
His restless mind to look abroad with hope.
—An irksome drudgery seems it to plod on,
Through hot and dusty ways, or pelting storm,
A vagrant Merchant under a heavy load
Bent as he moves, and needing frequent rest ;
Yet do such travellers find their own delight ;
And their hard service, deemed debasing now,
Gained merited respect in simpler times ;
When squire, and priest, and they who round them dwelt
In rustic sequestration—all dependent
Upon the PEDLAR's toil—supplied their wants,
Or pleased their fancies, with the wares he brought.
Not ignorant was the Youth that still no few
Of his adventurous countrymen were led
By perseverance in this track of life
To competence and ease :—to him it offered
Attractions manifold ;—and this he chose.
—His Parents on the enterprise bestowed
Their farewell benediction, but with hearts
Foreboding evil. From his native hills
He wandered far ; much did he see of men,
Their manners, their enjoyments, and pursuits,

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Their passions and their feelings ; chiefly those
 Essential and eternal in the heart,
 That, 'mid the simpler forms of rural life,
 Exist more simple in their elements,
 And speak a plainer language. In the woods,
 A lone Enthusiast, and among the fields,
 Itinerant in this labour, he had passed
 The better portion of his time ; and there 350
 Spontaneously had his affections thriven
 Amid the bounties of the year, the peace
 And liberty of nature ; there he kept
 In solitude and solitary thought
 His mind in a just equipoise of love.
 Serene it was, unclouded by the cares
 Of ordinary life ; unvexed, unwarped
 By partial bondage. In his steady course,
 No piteous revolutions had he felt,
 No wild varieties of joy and grief. 360
 Unoccupied by sorrow of its own,
 His heart lay open ; and, by nature tuned
 And constant disposition of his thoughts
 To sympathy with man, he was alive
 To all that was enjoyed where'er he went,
 And all that was endured ; for, in himself
 Happy, and quiet in his cheerfulness,
 He had no painful pressure from without
 That made him turn aside from wretchedness
 With coward fears. He could *afford* to suffer 370
 With those whom he saw suffer. Hence it came
 That in our best experience he was rich,
 And in the wisdom of our daily life.
 For hence, minutely, in his various rounds,
 He had observed the progress and decay
 Of many minds, of minds and bodies too ;
 The history of many families ;
 How they had prospered ; how they were o'erthrown
 By passion or mischance, or such misrule
 Among the unthinking masters of the earth 380
 As makes the nations groan.

This active course

He followed till provision for his wants
 Had been obtained ;—the Wanderer then resolved
 To pass the remnant of his days, untasked
 With needless services, from hardship free.
 His calling laid aside, he lived at ease :
 But still he loved to pace the public roads
 And the wild paths ; and, by the summer's warmth

Invited, often would he leave his home
 And journey far, revisiting the scenes 390
 That to his memory were most endeared.
 —Vigorous in health, of hopeful spirits, undamped
 By worldly-mindedness or anxious care ;
 Observant, studious, thoughtful, and refreshed
 By knowledge gathered up from day to day ;
 Thus had he lived a long and innocent life.

The Scottish Church, both on himself and those
 With whom from childhood he grew up, had held
 The strong hand of her purity ; and still
 Had watched him with an unrelenting eye. 400
 This he remembered in his riper age
 With gratitude, and reverential thoughts.
 But by the native vigour of his mind,
 By his habitual wanderings out of doors,
 By loneliness, and goodness, and kind works,
 Whate'er, in docile childhood or in youth,
 He had imbibed of fear or darker thought
 Was melted all away ; so true was this,
 That sometimes his religion seemed to me
 Self-taught, as of a dreamer in the woods ; 410
 Who to the model of his own pure heart
 Shaped his belief, as grace divine inspired,
 And human reason dictated with awe.
 —And surely never did there live on earth
 A man of kindlier nature. The rough sports
 And teasing ways of children vexed not him ;
 Indulgent listener was he to the tongue
 Of garrulous age ; nor did the sick man's tale,
 To his fraternal sympathy addressed,
 Obtain reluctant hearing.

Plain his garb ; 420
 Such as might suit a rustic Sire, prepared
 For sabbath duties ; yet he was a man
 Whom no one could have passed without remark.
 Active and nervous was his gait ; his limbs
 And his whole figure breathed intelligence.
 Time had compressed the freshness of his cheek
 Into a narrower circle of deep red,
 But had not tamed his eye ; that, under brows
 Shaggy and grey, had meanings which it brought
 From years of youth ; which, like a Being made 430
 Of many Beings, he had wondrous skill
 To blend with knowledge of the years to come,
 Human, or such as lie beyond the grave.

So was He framed ; and such his course of life
 Who now, with no appendage but a staff,
 The prized memorial of relinquished toils,
 Upon that cottage-bench reposed his limbs,
 Screened from the sun. Supine the Wanderer lay,
 His eyes as if in drowsiness half shut,
 The shadows of the breezy elms above
 Dappling his face. He had not heard the sound 440
 Of my approaching steps, and in the shade
 Unnoticed did I stand some minutes' space.
 At length I hailed him, seeing that his hat
 Was moist with water-drops, as if the brim
 Had newly scooped a running stream. He rose,
 And ere our lively greeting into peace
 Had settled, ' 'Tis,' said I, ' a burning day :
 My lips are parched with thirst, but you, it seems,
 Have somewhere found relief.' He, at the word, 450
 Pointing towards a sweet-briar, bade me climb
 The fence where that aspiring shrub looked out
 Upon the public way. It was a plot
 Of garden ground run wild, its matted weeds
 Marked with the steps of those, whom, as they passed,
 The gooseberry trees that shot in long lank slips,
 Or currants, hanging from their leafless stems,
 In scanty strings, had tempted to o'erleap
 The broken wall. I looked around, and there, 460
 Where two tall hedge-rows of thick alder boughs
 Joined in a cold damp nook, espied a well
 Shrouded with willow-flowers and plumy fern.
 My thirst I slaked, and, from the cheerless spot
 Withdrawing, straightway to the shade returned
 Where sate the old Man on the cottage-bench ;
 And, while, beside him, with uncovered head,
 I yet was standing, freely to respire,
 And cool my temples in the fanning air,
 Thus did he speak. ' I see around me here
 Things which you cannot see : we die, my Friend, 470
 Nor we alone, but that which each man loved
 And prized in his peculiar nook of earth
 Dies with him, or is changed ; and very soon
 Even of the good is no memorial left.
 —The Poets, in their elegies and songs
 Lamenting the departed, call the groves,
 They call upon the hills and streams to mourn,
 And senseless rocks ; nor idly ; for they speak,
 In these their invocations, with a voice
 Obedient to the strong creative power 480

Of human passion. Sympathies there are
 More tranquil, yet perhaps of kindred birth,
 That steal upon the meditative mind,
 And grow with thought. Beside yon spring I stood,
 And eyed its waters till we seemed to feel
 One sadness, they and I. For them a bond
 Of brotherhood is broken : time has been
 When, every day, the touch of human hand
 Dislodged the natural sleep that binds them up
 In mortal stillness ; and they ministered 490
 To human comfort. Stooping down to drink,
 Upon the slimy foot-stone I espied
 The useless fragment of a wooden bowl,
 Green with the moss of years, and subject only
 To the soft handling of the elements :
 There let it lie—how foolish are such thoughts !
 Forgive them ;—never—never did my steps
 Approach this door but she who dwelt within
 A daughter's welcome gave me, and I loved her
 As my own child. Oh, Sir ! the good die first, 500
 And they whose hearts are dry as summer dust
 Burn to the socket. Many a passenger
 Hath blessed poor Margaret for her gentle looks,
 When she upheld the cool refreshment drawn
 From that forsaken spring ; and no one came
 But he was welcome ; no one went away
 But that it seemed she loved him. She is dead,
 The light extinguished of her lonely hut,
 The hut itself abandoned to decay,
 And she forgotten in the quiet grave. 510

' I speak,' continued he, ' of One whose stock
 Of virtues bloomed beneath this lowly roof.
 She was a Woman of a steady mind,
 Tender and deep in her excess of love ;
 Not speaking much, pleased rather with the joy
 Of her own thoughts : by some especial care
 Her temper had been framed, as if to make
 A Being, who by adding love to peace
 Might live on earth a life of happiness.
 Her wedded Partner lacked not on his side 520
 The humble worth that satisfied her heart :
 Frugal, affectionate, sober, and withal
 Keenly industrious. She with pride would tell
 That he was often seated at his loom,
 In summer, ere the mower was abroad
 Among the dewy grass,—in early spring,

Ere the last star had vanished.—They who passed
 At evening, from behind the garden fence
 Might hear his busy spade, which he would ply,
 After his daily work, until the light
 Had failed, and every leaf and flower were lost
 In the dark hedges. So their days were spent
 In peace and comfort ; and a pretty boy
 Was their best hope, next to the God in heaven.

530

‘ Not twenty years ago, but you I think
 Can scarcely bear it now in mind, there came
 Two blighting seasons, when the fields were left
 With half a harvest. It pleased Heaven to add
 A worse affliction in the plague of war :
 This happy Land was stricken to the heart !
 A Wanderer then among the cottages,
 I, with my freight of winter raiment, saw
 The hardships of that season : many rich
 Sank down, as in a dream, among the poor ;
 And of the poor did many cease to be,
 And their place knew them not. Meanwhile, abridged
 Of daily comforts, gladly reconciled
 To numerous self-denials, Margaret
 Went struggling on through those calamitous years
 With cheerful hope, until the second autumn,
 When her life’s Helpmate on a sick-bed lay,
 Smitten with perilous fever. In disease
 He lingered long ; and, when his strength returned,
 He found the little he had stored, to meet
 The hour of accident or crippling age,
 Was all consumed. A second infant now
 Was added to the troubles of a time
 Laden, for them and all of their degree,
 With care and sorrow : shoals of artisans
 From ill-requited labour turned adrift
 Sought daily bread from public charity,
 They, and their wives and children—happier far
 Could they have lived as do the little birds
 That peck along the hedge-rows, or the kite
 That makes her dwelling on the mountain rocks !

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‘ A sad reverse it was for him who long
 Had filled with plenty, and possessed in peace,
 This lonely Cottage. At the door he stood,
 And whistled many a snatch of merry tunes
 That had no mirth in them ; or with his knife
 Carved uncouth figures on the heads of sticks—

570

Then, not less idly, sought, through every nook
 In house or garden, any casual work
 Of use or ornament; and with a strange,
 Amusing, yet uneasy, novelty,
 He mingled, where he might, the various tasks
 Of summer, autumn, winter, and of spring.
 But this endured not; his good humour soon
 Became a weight in which no pleasure was:
 And poverty brought on a petted mood 580
 And a sore temper: day by day he drooped,
 And he would leave his work—and to the town
 Would turn without an errand his slack steps;
 Or wander here and there among the fields.
 One while he would speak lightly of his babes,
 And with a cruel tongue: at other times
 He tossed them with a false unnatural joy:
 And 'twas a rueful thing to see the looks
 Of the poor innocent children. "Every smile,"
 Said Margaret to me, here beneath these trees, 590
 "Made my heart bleed."

At this the Wanderer paused

And, looking up to those enormous elms,
 He said, "'Tis now the hour of deepest noon.
 At this still season of repose and peace,
 This hour when all things which are not at rest
 Are cheerful; while this multitude of flies
 With tuneful hum is filling all the air;
 Why should a tear be on an old Man's cheek?
 Why should we thus, with an untoward mind,
 And in the weakness of humanity, 600
 From natural wisdom turn our hearts away;
 To natural comfort shut our eyes and ears;
 And, feeding on disquiet, thus disturb
 The calm of nature with our restless thoughts?'

HE spake with somewhat of a solemn tone:
 But, when he ended, there was in his face
 Such easy cheerfulness, a look so mild,
 That for a little time it stole away
 All recollection; and that simple tale
 Passed from my mind like a forgotten sound. 610
 A while on trivial things we held discourse,
 To me soon tasteless. In my own despite,
 I thought of that poor Woman as of one
 Whom I had known and loved. He had rehearsed
 Her homely tale with such familiar power,

With such an active countenance, an eye
 So busy, that the things of which he spake
 Seemed present ; and, attention now relaxed,
 A heart-felt chillness crept along my veins.
 I rose ; and, having left the breezy shade,
 Stood drinking comfort from the warmer sun,
 That had not cheered me long—ere, looking round
 Upon that tranquil Ruin, I returned,
 And begged of the old Man that, for my sake,
 He would resume his story.

620

He replied,
 ‘ It were a wantonness, and would demand
 Severe reproof, if we were men whose hearts
 Could hold vain dalliance with the misery
 Even of the dead ; contented thence to draw
 A momentary pleasure, never marked
 By reason, barren of all future good.
 But we have known that there is often found
 In mournful thoughts, and always might be found,
 A power to virtue friendly ; were ’t not so,
 I am a dreamer among men, indeed
 An idle dreamer ! ’Tis a common tale,
 An ordinary sorrow of man’s life,
 A tale of silent suffering, hardly clothed
 In bodily form.—But without further bidding
 I will proceed.

630

While thus it fared with them,
 To whom this cottage, till those hapless years,
 Had been a blessed home, it was my chance
 To travel in a country far remote ;
 And when these lofty elms once more appeared
 What pleasant expectations lured me on
 O’er the flat Common !—With quick step I reached
 The threshold, lifted with light hand the latch ;
 But, when I entered, Margaret looked at me
 A little while ; then turned her head away
 Speechless,—and, sitting down upon a chair,
 Wept bitterly. I wist not what to do,
 Nor how to speak to her. Poor Wretch ! at last
 She rose from off her seat, and then,—O Sir !
 I cannot *tell* how she pronounced my name :—
 With fervent love, and with a face of grief
 Unutterably helpless, and a look
 That seemed to cling upon me, she enquired
 If I had seen her husband. As she spake
 A strange surprise and fear came to my heart,

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Nor had I power to answer ere she told
That he had disappeared—not two months gone.
He left his house: two wretched days had past,
And on the third, as wistfully she raised
Her head from off her pillow, to look forth,
Like one in trouble, for returning light,
Within her chamber-casement she espied
A folded paper, lying as if placed
To meet her waking eyes. This tremblingly
She opened—found no writing, but beheld
Pieces of money carefully enclosed,
Silver and gold. “I shuddered at the sight,”
Said Margaret, “for I knew it was his hand
That must have placed it there; and ere that day
Was ended, that long anxious day, I learned,
From one who by my husband had been sent
With the sad news, that he had joined a troop
Of soldiers, going to a distant land.
—He left me thus—he could not gather heart
To take a farewell of me; for he feared
That I should follow with my babes, and sink
Beneath the misery of that wandering life.”

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‘This tale did Margaret tell with many tears:
And, when she ended, I had little power
To give her comfort, and was glad to take
Such words of hope from her own mouth as served
To cheer us both. But long we had not talked
Ere we built up a pile of better thoughts,
And with a brighter eye she looked around
As if she had been shedding tears of joy.
We parted.—’Twas the time of early spring;
I left her busy with her garden tools;
And well remember, o’er that fence she looked,
And, while I paced along the foot-way path,
Called out, and sent a blessing after me,
With tender cheerfulness, and with a voice
That seemed the very sound of happy thoughts.

690

‘I roved o’er many a hill and many a dale,
With my accustomed load; in heat and cold,
Through many a wood and many an open ground,
In sunshine and in shade, in wet and fair,
Drooping or blithe of heart, as might befall;
My best companions now the driving winds,
And now the “trotting brooks” and whispering trees,
And now the music of my own sad steps,

700

With many a short-lived thought that passed between,
And disappeared.

I journeyed back this way,
When, in the warmth of midsummer, the wheat
Was yellow ; and the soft and bladed grass,
Springing afresh, had o'er the hay-field spread
Its tender verdure. At the door arrived, 710
I found that she was absent. In the shade,
Where now we sit, I waited her return.
Her cottage, then a cheerful object, wore
Its customary look,—only, it seemed,
The honeysuckle, crowding round the porch,
Hung down in heavier tufts ; and that bright weed,
The yellow stone-crop, suffered to take root
Along the window's edge, profusely grew
Blinding the lower panes. I turned aside,
And strolled into her garden. It appeared 720
To lag behind the season, and had lost
Its pride of neatness. Daisy-flowers and thrift
Had broken their trim border-lines, and straggled
O'er paths they used to deck : carnations, once
Prized for surpassing beauty, and no less
For the peculiar pains they had required,
Declined their languid heads, wanting support.
The cumbrous bind-weed, with its wreaths and bells,
Had twined about her two small rows of peas,
And dragged them to the earth.

Ere this an hour
Was wasted.—Back I turned my restless steps ; 731
A stranger passed ; and, guessing whom I sought,
He said that she was used to ramble far.—
The sun was sinking in the west ; and now
I sate with sad impatience. From within
Her solitary infant cried aloud ;
Then, like a blast that dies away self-stilled,
The voice was silent. From the bench I rose ;
But neither could divert nor soothe my thoughts.
The spot, though fair, was very desolate— 740
The longer I remained, more desolate :
And, looking round me, now I first observed
The corner stones, on either side the porch,
With dull red stains discoloured, and stuck o'er
With tufts and hairs of wool, as if the sheep,
That fed upon the Common, thither came
Familiarly, and found a couching-place
Even at her threshold. Deeper shadows fell
From these tall elms ; the cottage-clock struck eight ;—

I turned, and saw her distant a few steps. 750
 Her face was pale and thin—her figure, too,
 Was changed. As she unlocked the door, she said,
 "It grieves me you have waited here so long,
 But, in good truth, I've wandered much of late ;
 And, sometimes—to my shame I speak—have need
 Of my best prayers to bring me back again."
 While on the board she spread our evening meal,
 She told me—interrupting not the work
 Which gave employment to her listless hands—
 That she had parted with her elder child ; 760
 To a kind master on a distant farm
 Now happily apprenticed.—"I perceive
 You look at me, and you have cause ; to-day
 I have been travelling far ; and many days
 About the fields I wander, knowing this
 Only, that what I seek I cannot find ;
 And so I waste my time : for I am changed ;
 And to myself," said she, "have done much wrong
 And to this helpless infant. I have slept
 Weeping, and weeping have I waked ; my tears 770
 Have flowed as if my body were not such
 As others are ; and I could never die.
 But I am now in mind and in my heart
 More easy ; and I hope," said she, "that God
 Will give me patience to endure the things
 Which I behold at home."

It would have grieved
 Your very soul to see her. Sir, I feel
 The story linger in my heart ; I fear
 'Tis long and tedious ; but my spirit clings 780
 To that poor Woman :—so familiarly
 Do I perceive her manner, and her look,
 And presence ; and so deeply do I feel
 Her goodness, that, not seldom, in my walks
 A momentary trance comes over me ;
 And to myself I seem to muse on One
 By sorrow laid asleep ; or borne away,
 A human being destined to awake
 To human life, or something very near
 To human life, when he shall come again
 For whom she suffered. Yes, it would have grieved 790
 Your very soul to see her : evermore
 Her eyelids drooped, her eyes downward were cast ;
 And, when she at her table gave me food,
 She did not look at me. Her voice was low,
 Her body was subdued. In every act

Pertaining to her house-affairs, appeared
 The careless stillness of a thinking mind
 Self-occupied ; to which all outward things
 Are like an idle matter. Still she sighed,
 But yet no motion of the breast was seen,
 No heaving of the heart. While by the fire
 We sate together, sighs came on my ear,
 I knew not how, and hardly whence they came.

800

‘ Ere my departure, to her care I gave,
 For her son’s use, some tokens of regard,
 Which with a look of welcome she received ;
 And I exhorted her to place her trust
 In God’s good love, and seek his help by prayer.
 I took my staff, and, when I kissed her babe,
 The tears stood in her eyes. I left her then
 With the best hope and comfort I could give :
 She thanked me for my wish ;—but for my hope
 It seemed she did not thank me.

810

I returned,
 And took my rounds along this road again
 When on its sunny bank the primrose flower
 Peeped forth, to give an earnest of the Spring.
 I found her sad and drooping : she had learned
 No tidings of her husband ; if he lived,
 She knew not that he lived ; if he were dead,
 She knew not he was dead. She seemed the same
 In person and appearance ; but her house
 Bespake a sleepy hand of negligence ;
 The floor was neither dry nor neat, the hearth
 Was comfortless, and her small lot of books,
 Which, in the cottage-window, heretofore
 Had been piled up against the corner panes
 In seemly order, now, with straggling leaves
 Lay scattered here and there, open or shut,
 As they had chanced to fall. Her infant Babe
 Had from its Mother caught the trick of grief,
 And sighed among its playthings. I withdrew,
 And once again entering the garden saw,
 More plainly still, that poverty and grief
 Were now come nearer to her : weeds defaced
 The hardened soil, and knots of withered grass :
 No ridges there appeared of clear black mould,
 No winter greenness ; of her herbs and flowers,
 It seemed the better part were gnawed away
 Or trampled into earth ; a chain of straw,
 Which had been twined about the slender stem

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Of a young apple-tree, lay at its root ;
 The bark was nibbled round by truant sheep.
 —Margaret stood near, her infant in her arms,
 And, noting that my eye was on the tree,
 She said, "I fear it will be dead and gone
 Ere Robert come again." When to the House
 We had returned together, she enquired
 If I had any hope :—but for her babe
 And for her little orphan boy, she said,
 She had no wish to live, that she must die 850
 Of sorrow. Yet I saw the idle loom
 Still in its place ; his Sunday garments hung
 Upon the self-same nail ; his very staff
 Stood undisturbed behind the door.

And when,
 In bleak December, I retraced this way,
 She told me that her little babe was dead,
 And she was left alone. She now, released
 From her maternal cares, had taken up
 The employment common through these wilds, and
 gained,
 By spinning hemp, a pittance for herself ; 860
 And for this end had hired a neighbour's boy
 To give her needful help. That very time
 Most willingly she put her work aside,
 And walked with me along the miry road,
 Heedless how far ; and, in such piteous sort
 That any heart had ached to hear her, begged
 That, wheresoe'er I went, I still would ask
 For him whom she had lost. We parted then—
 Our final parting ; for from that time forth
 Did many seasons pass ere I returned 870
 Into this tract again.

Nine tedious years ;
 From their first separation, nine long years,
 She lingered in unquiet widowhood ;
 A Wife and Widow. Needs must it have been
 A sore heart-wasting ! I have heard, my Friend,
 That in yon arbour oftentimes she sate
 Alone, through half the vacant sabbath day ;
 And, if a dog passed by, she still would quit
 The shade, and look abroad. On this old bench
 For hours she sate ; and evermore her eye 880
 Was busy in the distance, shaping things
 That made her heart beat quick. You see that path,
 Now faint,—the grass has crept o'er its grey line ;
 There, to and fro, she paced through many a day

Of the warm summer, from a belt of hemp
 That girt her waist, spinning the long-drawn thread
 With backward steps. Yet ever as there passed
 A man whose garments showed the soldier's red,
 Or crippled mendicant in sailor's garb,
 The little child who sate to turn the wheel 890
 Ceased from his task ; and she with faltering voice
 Made many a fond enquiry ; and when they,
 Whose presence gave no comfort, were gone by,
 Her heart was still more sad. And by yon gate,
 That bars the traveller's road, she often stood,
 And when a stranger horseman came, the latch
 Would lift, and in his face look wistfully :
 Most happy, if, from aught discovered there
 Of tender feeling, she might dare repeat
 The same sad question. Meanwhile her poor Hut 900
 Sank to decay ; for he was gone, whose hand,
 At the first nipping of October frost,
 Closed up each chink, and with fresh bands of straw
 Chequered the green-grown thatch. And so she lived
 Through the long winter, reckless and alone ;
 Until her house by frost, and thaw, and rain,
 Was sapped ; and while she slept, the nightly damps
 Did chill her breast ; and in the stormy day
 Her tattered clothes were ruffled by the wind,
 Even at the side of her own fire. Yet still 910
 She loved this wretched spot, nor would for worlds
 Have parted hence ; and still that length of road,
 And this rude bench, one torturing hope endeared,
 Fast rooted at her heart : and here, my Friend,—
 In sickness she remained ; and here she died ;
 Last human tenant of these ruined walls !'

The old Man ceased : he saw that I was moved ;
 From that low bench, rising instinctively
 I turned aside in weakness, nor had power
 To thank him for the tale which he had told. 920
 I stood, and leaning o'er the garden wall
 Reviewed that Woman's sufferings ; and it seemed
 To comfort me while with a brother's love
 I blessed her in the impotence of grief.
 Then towards the cottage I returned ; and traced
 Fondly, though with an interest more mild,
 That secret spirit of humanity
 Which, 'mid the calm oblivious tendencies
 Of nature, 'mid her plants, and weeds, and flowers,
 And silent overgrowings, still survived. 930

The old Man, noting this, resumed, and said,
 'My Friend! enough to sorrow you have given,
 The purposes of wisdom ask no more :
 Nor more would she have craved as due to One
 Who, in her worst distress, had oftentimes felt
 The unbounded might of prayer; and learned, with soul
 Fixed on the Cross, that consolation springs,
 From sources deeper far than deepest pain,
 For the meek Sufferer. Why then should we read
 The forms of things with an unworthy eye? 940
 She sleeps in the calm earth, and peace is here.
 I well remember that those very plumes,
 Those weeds, and the high spear-grass on that wall,
 By mist and silent rain-drops silvered o'er,
 As once I passed, into my heart conveyed
 So still an image of tranquillity,
 So calm and still, and looked so beautiful
 Amid the uneasy thoughts which filled my mind,
 That what we feel of sorrow and despair
 From ruin and from change, and all the grief 950
 That passing shows of Being leave behind,
 Appeared an idle dream, that could maintain,
 Nowhere, dominion o'er the enlightened spirit
 Whose meditative sympathies repose
 Upon the breast of Faith. I turned away,
 And walked along my road in happiness.

He ceased. Ere long the sun declining shot
 A slant and mellow radiance, which began
 To fall upon us, while, beneath the trees,
 We sate on that low bench: and now we felt, 960
 Admonished thus, the sweet hour coming on.
 A linnet warbled from those lofty elms,
 A thrush sang loud, and other melodies,
 At distance heard, peopled the milder air.
 The old Man rose, and, with a sprightly mien
 Of hopeful preparation, grasped his staff;
 Together casting then a farewell look
 Upon those silent walls, we left the shade;
 And, ere the stars were visible, had reached
 A village-inn,—our evening resting-place. 970

BOOK SECOND

THE SOLITARY

ARGUMENT

THE Author describes his travels with the Wanderer, whose character is further illustrated.—Morning scene, and view of a Village Wake.—Wanderer's account of a Friend whom he purposes to visit.—View, from an eminence, of the Valley which his Friend had chosen for his retreat.—Sound of singing from below.—A funeral procession.—Descent into the Valley.—Observations drawn from the Wanderer at sight of a book accidentally discovered in a recess in the Valley.—Meeting with the Wanderer's friend, the Solitary.—Wanderer's description of the mode of burial in this mountainous district.—Solitary contrasts with this, that of the individual carried a few minutes before from the cottage.—The cottage entered.—Description of the Solitary's apartment.—Repast there.—View, from the window, of two mountain summits; and the Solitary's description of the companionship they afford him.—Account of the departed inmate of the cottage.—Description of a grand spectacle upon the mountains, with its effect upon the Solitary's mind.—Leave the house.

IN days of yore how fortunately fared
 The Minstrel ! wandering on from hall to hall,
 Baronial court or royal ; cheered with gifts
 Munificent, and love, and ladies' praise ;
 Now meeting on his road an armèd knight,
 Now resting with a pilgrim by the side
 Of a clear brook ;—beneath an abbey's roof
 One evening sumptuously lodged ; the next,
 Humbly in a religious hospital ;
 Or with some merry outlaws of the wood ; 10
 Or haply shrouded in a hermit's cell.
 Him, sleeping or awake, the robber spared ;
 He walked—protected from the sword of war
 By virtue of that sacred instrument
 His harp, suspended at the traveller's side ;
 His dear companion wheresoe'er he went
 Opening from land to land an easy way
 By melody, and by the charm of verse.
 Yet not the noblest of that honoured Race
 Drew happier, loftier, more empassioned, thoughts 20
 From his long journeyings and eventful life,
 Than this obscure Itinerant had skill
 To gather, ranging through the tamer ground
 Of these our unimagined days ;
 Both while he trod the earth in humblest guise
 Accoutred with his burthen and his staff ;
 And now, when free to move with lighter pace.

What wonder, then, if I, whose favourite school
 Hath been the fields, the roads, and rural lanes,
 Looked on this guide with reverential love ?
 Each with the other pleased, we now pursued
 Our journey, under favourable skies.
 Turn wheresoe'er we would, he was a light
 Unfailing : not a hamlet could we pass,
 Rarely a house, that did not yield to him
 Remembrances ; or from his tongue call forth
 Some way-beguiling tale. Nor less regard
 Accompanied those strains of apt discourse,
 Which nature's various objects might inspire ;
 And in the silence of his face I read
 His overflowing spirit. Birds and beasts,
 And the mute fish that glances in the stream,
 And harmless reptile coiling in the sun,
 And gorgeous insect hovering in the air,
 The fowl domestic, and the household dog—
 In his capacious mind, he loved them all :
 Their rights acknowledging he felt for all.
 Oft was occasion given me to perceive
 How the calm pleasures of the pasturing herd
 To happy contemplation soothed his walk ;
 How the poor brute's condition, forced to run
 Its course of suffering in the public road,
 Sad contrast ! all too often smote his heart
 With unavailing pity. Rich in love
 And sweet humanity, he was, himself,
 To the degree that he desired, beloved.
 Smiles of good-will from faces that he knew
 Greeted us all day long ; we took our seats
 By many a cottage-hearth, where he received
 The welcome of an Inmate from afar,
 And I at once forgot I was a Stranger.
 —Nor was he loth to enter ragged huts,
 Huts where his charity was blest ; his voice
 Heard as the voice of an experienced friend.
 And, sometimes—where the poor man held dispute
 With his own mind, unable to subdue
 Impatience through inaptness to perceive
 General distress in his particular lot ;
 Or cherishing resentment, or in vain
 Struggling against it ; with a soul perplexed,
 And finding in herself no steady power
 To draw the line of comfort that divides
 Calamity, the chastisement of Heaven,
 From the injustice of our brother men—

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To him appeal was made as to a judge ;
 Who, with an understanding heart, allayed
 The perturbation ; listened to the plea ;
 Resolved the dubious point ; and sentence gave
 So grounded, so applied, that it was heard
 With softened spirit, even when it condemned.

80

Such intercourse I witnessed, while we roved,
 Now as his choice directed, now as mine ;
 Or both, with equal readiness of will,
 Our course submitting to the changeful breeze
 Of accident. But when the rising sun
 Had three times called us to renew our walk,
 My Fellow-traveller, with earnest voice,
 As if the thought were but a moment old,
 Claimed absolute dominion for the day.
 We started—and he led me toward the hills,
 Up through an ample vale, with higher hills
 Before us, mountains stern and desolate ;
 But, in the majesty of distance, now
 Set off, and to our ken appearing fair
 Of aspect, with ærial softness clad,
 And beautified with morning's purple beams.

90

The wealthy, the luxurious, by the stress
 Of business roused, or pleasure, ere their time,
 May roll in chariots, or provoke the hoofs
 Of the fleet coursers they bestride, to raise
 From earth the dust of morning, slow to rise ;
 And they, if blest with health and hearts at ease,
 Shall lack not their enjoyment :—but how faint
 Compared with ours ! who, pacing side by side,
 Could, with an eye of leisure, look on all
 That we beheld ; and lend the listening sense
 To every grateful sound of earth and air ;
 Pausing at will—our spirits braced, our thoughts
 Pleasant as roses in the thickets blown,
 And pure as dew bathing their crimson leaves.

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Mount slowly, sun ! that we may journey long,
 By this dark hill protected from thy beams !
 Such is the summer pilgrim's frequent wish ;
 But quickly from among our morning thoughts
 'Twas chased away : for, toward the western side
 Of the broad vale, casting a casual glance,
 We saw a throng of people ;—wherefore met ?
 Blithe notes of music, suddenly let loose

On the thrilled ear, and flags uprising, yield
 Prompt answer ; they proclaim the annual Wake, 120
 Which the bright season favours.—Tabor and pipe
 In purpose join to hasten or reprove
 The laggard Rustic ; and repay with boons
 Of merriment a party-coloured knot,
 Already formed upon the village-green.
 —Beyond the limits of the shadow cast
 By the broad hill, glistened upon our sight
 That gay assemblage. Round them and above,
 Glitter, with dark recesses interposed,
 Casement, and cottage-roof, and stems of trees 130
 Half-veiled in vapoury cloud, the silver steam
 Of dews fast melting on their leafy boughs
 By the strong sunbeams smitten. Like a mast
 Of gold, the Maypole shines ; as if the rays
 Of morning, aided by exhaling dew,
 With gladsome influence could re-animate
 The faded garlands dangling from its sides.

Said I, ‘ The music and the sprightly scene
 Invite us ; shall we quit our road, and join
 These festive matins ? ’—He replied, ‘ Not loth 140
 To linger I would here with you partake,
 Not one hour merely, but till evening’s close,
 The simple pastimes of the day and place.
 By the fleet Racers, ere the sun be set,
 The turf of yon large pasture will be skimmed ;
 There, too, the lusty Wrestlers shall contend :
 But know we not that he, who intermits
 The appointed task and duties of the day,
 Untunes full oft the pleasures of the day ;
 Checking the finer spirits that refuse 150
 To flow, when purposes are lightly changed ?
 A length of journey yet remains untraced :
 Let us proceed.’ Then, pointing with his staff
 Raised toward those craggy summits, his intent
 He thus imparted :—

‘ In a spot that lies
 Among yon mountain fastnesses concealed,
 You will receive, before the hour of noon,
 Good recompense, I hope, for this day’s toil,
 From sight of One who lives secluded there,
 Lonesome and lost : of whom, and whose past life, 160
 (Not to forestall such knowledge as may be
 More faithfully collected from himself)
 This brief communication shall suffice.

' Though now sojourning there, he, like myself,
 Sprang from a stock of lowly parentage
 Among the wilds of Scotland, in a tract
 Where many a sheltered and well-tended plant
 Bears, on the humblest ground of social life,
 Blossoms of piety and innocence.
 Such grateful promises his youth displayed : 170
 And, having shown in study forward zeal,
 He to the Ministry was duly called ;
 And straight, incited by a curious mind
 Filled with vague hopes, he undertook the charge
 Of Chaplain to a military troop
 Cheered by the Highland bagpipe, as they marched
 In plaided vest,—his fellow-countrymen.
 This office filling, yet by native power
 And force of native inclination made
 An intellectual ruler in the haunts 180
 Of social vanity, he walked the world,
 Gay, and affecting graceful gaiety ;
 Lax, buoyant—less a pastor with his flock
 Than a soldier among soldiers—lived and roamed
 Where Fortune led :—and Fortune, who oft proves
 The careless wanderer's friend, to him made known
 A blooming Lady—a conspicuous flower,
 Admired for beauty, for her sweetness praised ;
 Whom he had sensibility to love,
 Ambition to attempt, and skill to win. 190

' For this fair Bride, most rich in gifts of mind,
 Nor sparingly endowed with worldly wealth,
 His office he relinquished ; and retired
 From the world's notice to a rural home.
 Youth's season yet with him was scarcely past,
 And she was in youth's prime. How free their love,
 How full their joy ! Till, pitiable doom !
 In the short course of one undreaded year,
 Death blasted all. Death suddenly o'erthrew
 Two lovely Children—all that they possessed ! 200
 The Mother followed :—miserably bare
 The one Survivor stood ; he wept, he prayed
 For his dismissal, day and night, compelled
 To hold communion with the grave, and face
 With pain the regions of eternity.
 An uncomplaining apathy displaced
 This anguish ; and, indifferent to delight,
 To aim and purpose, he consumed his days,
 To private interest dead, and public care.

So lived he ; so he might have died.

But now,

210

To the wide world's astonishment, appeared
 A glorious opening, the unlooked-for dawn,
 That promised everlasting joy to France !
 Her voice of social transport reached even him !
 He broke from his contracted bounds, repaired
 To the great City, an emporium then
 Of golden expectations, and receiving
 Freights every day from a new world of hope.
 Thither his popular talents he transferred ;
 And, from the pulpit, zealously maintained
 The cause of Christ and civil liberty,
 As one, and moving to one glorious end.
 Intoxicating service ! I might say
 A happy service ; for he was sincere
 As vanity and fondness for applause,
 And new and shapeless wishes, would allow.

220

‘That righteous cause (such power hath freedom)
 bound,

For one hostility, in friendly league,
 Ethereal natures and the worst of slaves ;
 Was served by rival advocates that came
 From regions opposite as heaven and hell.
 One courage seemed to animate them all ;
 And, from the dazzling conquests daily gained
 By their united efforts, there arose
 A proud and most presumptuous confidence
 In the transcendent wisdom of the age,
 And her discernment ; not alone in rights,
 And in the origin and bounds of power
 Social and temporal ; but in laws divine,
 Deduced by reason, or to faith revealed.
 An overweening trust was raised ; and fear
 Cast out, alike of person and of thing.
 Plague from this union spread, whose subtle bane
 The strongest did not easily escape ;
 And He, what wonder ! took a mortal taint.
 How shall I trace the change, how bear to tell
 That he broke faith with them whom he had laid
 In earth's dark chambers, with a Christian's hope !
 An infidel contempt of holy writ
 Stole by degrees upon his mind ; and hence
 Life, like that Roman Janus, double-faced ;
 Vildest hypocrisy—the laughing, gay
 Hypocrisy, not leagued with fear, but pride.

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Smooth words he had to wheedle simple souls ;
 But, for disciples of the inner school,
 Old freedom was old servitude, and they
 The wisest whose opinions stooped the least
 To known restraints ; and who most boldly drew
 Hopeful prognostications from a creed,
 That, in the light of false philosophy,
 Spread like a halo round a misty moon,
 Widening its circle as the storms advance.

260

‘ His sacred function was at length renounced ;
 And every day and every place enjoyed
 The unshackled layman’s natural liberty ;
 Speech, manners, morals, all without disguise.
 I do not wish to wrong him ; though the course
 Of private life licentiously displayed
 Unhallowed actions—planted like a crown
 Upon the insolent aspiring brow
 Of spurious notions—worn as open signs
 Of prejudice subdued—still he retained,
 ‘Mid much abasement, what he had received
 From nature, an intense and glowing mind.
 Wherefore, when humbled Liberty grew weak,
 And mortal sickness on her face appeared,
 He coloured objects to his own desire
 As with a lover’s passion. Yet his moods
 Of pain were keen as those of better men,
 Nay keener, as his fortitude was less :
 And he continued, when worse days were come,
 To deal about his sparkling eloquence,
 Struggling against the strange reverse with zeal
 That showed like happiness. But, in despite
 Of all this outside bravery, within,
 He neither felt encouragement nor hope :
 For moral dignity, and strength of mind,
 Were wanting ; and simplicity of life ;
 And reverence for himself ; and, last and best,
 Confiding thoughts, through love and fear of Him
 Before whose sight the troubles of this world
 Are vain, as billows in a tossing sea.

270

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290

‘ The glory of the times fading away—
 The splendor, which had given a festal air
 To self-importance, hallowed it, and veiled
 From his own sight—this gone, he forfeited
 All joy in human nature ; was consumed,
 And vexed, and chafed, by levity and scorn,

And fruitless indignation ; galled by pride ;
 Made desperate by contempt of men who throve 300
 Before his sight in power or fame, and won,
 Without desert, what he desired ; weak men,
 Too weak even for his envy or his hate !
 Tormented thus, after a wandering course
 Of discontent, and inwardly opprest
 With malady—in part, I fear, provoked
 By weariness of life—he fixed his home,
 Or, rather say, sate down by very chance,
 Among these rugged hills ; where now he dwells,
 And wastes the sad remainder of his hours, 310
 Steeped in a self-indulging spleen, that wants not
 Its own voluptuousness ;—on this resolved,
 With this content, that he will live and die
 Forgotten,—at safe distance from “a world
 Not moving to his mind.”’

These serious words

Closed the preparatory notices
 That served my Fellow-traveller to beguile
 The way, while we advanced up that wide vale.
 Diverging now (as if his quest had been
 Some secret of the mountains, cavern, fall 320
 Of water, or some lofty eminence,
 Renowned for splendid prospect far and wide)
 We scaled, without a track to ease our steps,
 A steep ascent ; and reached a dreary plain,
 With a tumultuous waste of huge hill tops
 Before us ; savage region ! which I paced
 Dispirited : when, all at once, behold !
 Beneath our feet, a little lowly vale,
 A lowly vale, and yet uplifted high
 Among the mountains ; even as if the spot 330
 Had been from eldest time by wish of theirs
 So placed, to be shut out from all the world !
 Urn-like it was in shape, deep as an urn ;
 With rocks encompassed, save that to the south
 Was one small opening, where a heath-clad ridge
 Supplied a boundary less abrupt and close ;
 A quiet treeless nook, with two green fields,
 A liquid pool that glittered in the sun,
 And one bare dwelling ; one abode, no more !
 It seemed the home of poverty and toil, 340
 Though not of want : the little fields, made green
 By husbandry of many thrifty years,
 Paid cheerful tribute to the moorland house.
 —There crows the cock, single in his domain :

The small birds find in spring no thicket there
 To shroud them; only from the neighbouring vales
 The cuckoo, straggling up to the hill tops,
 Shouteth faint tidings of some gladder place.

Ah! what a sweet Recess, thought I, is here!
 Instantly throwing down my limbs at ease 350
 Upon a bed of heath;—full many a spot
 Of hidden beauty have I chanced to espy
 Among the mountains; never one like this;
 So lonesome, and so perfectly secure;
 Not melancholy—no, for it is green,
 And bright, and fertile, furnished in itself
 With the few needful things that life requires.
 —In rugged arms how softly does it lie,
 How tenderly protected! Far and near
 We have an image of the pristine earth, 360
 The planet in its nakedness: were this
 Man's only dwelling, sole appointed seat,
 First, last, and single, in the breathing world,
 It could not be more quiet: peace is here
 Or nowhere; days unruffled by the gale
 Of public news or private; years that pass
 Forgetfully; uncalled upon to pay
 The common penalties of mortal life,
 Sickness, or accident, or grief, or pain.

On these and kindred thoughts intent I lay 370
 In silence musing by my Comrade's side,
 He also silent; when from out the heart
 Of that profound abyss a solemn voice,
 Or several voices in one solemn sound,
 Was heard ascending; mournful, deep, and slow
 The cadence, as of psalms—a funeral dirge!
 We listened, looking down upon the hut,
 But seeing no one: meanwhile from below
 The strain continued, spiritual as before;
 And now distinctly could I recognise 380
 These words:—'*Shall in the grave thy love be known,
 In death thy faithfulness?*'—'God rest his soul!'
 Said the old man, abruptly breaking silence,—
 'He is departed, and finds peace at last!'

This scarcely spoken, and those holy strains
 Not ceasing, forth appeared in view a band
 Of rustic persons, from behind the hut
 Bearing a coffin in the midst, with which

They shaped their course along the sloping side
 Of that small valley, singing as they moved ; 390
 A sober company and few, the men
 Bare-headed, and all decently attired !
 Some steps when they had thus advanced, the dirge
 Ended ; and, from the stillness that ensued
 Recovering, to my Friend I said, ' You spake,
 Methought, with apprehension that these rites
 Are paid to Him upon whose shy retreat
 This day we purposed to intrude.'—' I did so.
 But let us hence, that we may learn the truth :
 Perhaps it is not he but some one else 400
 For whom this pious service is performed ;
 Some other tenant of the solitude.'

So, to a steep and difficult descent
 Trusting ourselves, we wound from crag to crag,
 Where passage could be won ; and, as the last
 Of the mute train, behind the heathy top
 Of that off-sloping outlet, disappeared,
 I, more impatient in my downward course,
 Had landed upon easy ground ; and there
 Stood waiting for my Comrade. When behold 410
 An object that enticed my steps aside !
 A narrow, winding, entry opened out
 Into a platform—that lay, sheepfold-wise,
 Enclosed between an upright mass of rock
 And one old moss-grown wall ;—a cool recess,
 And fanciful ! For where the rock and wall
 Met in an angle, hung a penthouse, framed
 By thrusting two rude staves into the wall
 And overlaying them with mountain sods ;
 To weather-fend a little turf-built seat 420
 Whereon a full-grown man might rest, nor dread
 The burning sunshine, or a transient shower ;
 But the whole plainly wrought by children's hands !
 Whose skill had thronged the floor with a proud show
 Of baby-houses, curiously arranged ;
 Nor wanting ornament of walks between,
 With mimic trees inserted in the turf,
 And gardens interposed. Pleased with the sight,
 I could not choose but beckon to my Guide,
 Who, entering, round him threw a careless glance 430
 Impatient to pass on, when I exclaimed,
 ' Lo ! what is here ? ' and, stooping down, drew forth
 A book, that, in the midst of stones and moss
 And wreck of party-coloured earthen-ware,

Aptly disposed, had lent its help to raise
 One of those petty structures. 'His it must be!' 440
 Exclaimed the Wanderer, 'cannot but be his,
 And he is gone!' The book, which in my hand
 Had opened of itself (for it was swoln
 With searching damp, and seemingly had lain
 To the injurious elements exposed
 From week to week,) I found to be a work
 In the French tongue, a Novel of Voltaire,
 His famous Optimist. 'Unhappy Man!' 450
 Exclaimed my Friend: 'here then has been to him
 Retreat within retreat, a sheltering-place
 Within how deep a shelter! He had fits,
 Even to the last, of genuine tenderness,
 And loved the haunts of children; here, no doubt,
 Pleasing and pleased, he shared their simple sports,
 Or sate companionless; and here the book,
 Left and forgotten in his careless way,
 Must by the cottage-children have been found:
 Heaven bless them, and their inconsiderate work!
 To what odd purpose have the darlings turned
 This sad memorial of their hapless friend!'

'Me,' said I, 'most doth it surprise, to find
 Such book in such a place!'—'A book it is,' 460
 He answered, 'to the Person suited well,
 Though little suited to surrounding things:
 'Tis strange, I grant; and stranger still had been
 To see the Man who owned it, dwelling here,
 With one poor shepherd, far from all the world!—
 Now, if our errand hath been thrown away,
 As from these intimations I forbode,
 Grieved shall I be—less for my sake than yours,
 And least of all for him who is no more.'

By this, the book was in the old Man's hand;
 And he continued, glancing on the leaves 470
 An eye of scorn:—'The lover,' said he, 'doomed
 To love when hope hath failed him—whom no depth
 Of privacy is deep enough to hide,
 Hath yet his bracelet or his lock of hair,
 And that is joy to him. When change of times
 Hath summoned kings to scaffolds, do but give
 The faithful servant, who must hide his head
 Henceforth in whatsoever nook he may,
 A kerchief sprinkled with his master's blood,
 And he too hath his comforter. How poor,

Beyond all poverty how destitute,
 Must that Man have been left, who, hither driven,
 Flying or seeking, could yet bring with him
 No dearer relique, and no better stay,
 Than this dull product of a scoffer's pen,
 Impure conceits discharging from a heart
 Hardened by impious pride !—I did not fear
 To tax you with this journey ' ;—mildly said
 My venerable Friend, as forth we stepped
 Into the presence of the cheerful light—
 ' For I have knowledge that you do not shrink
 From moving spectacles ;—but let us on.' 480 490

So speaking, on he went, and at the word
 I followed, till he made a sudden stand :
 For full in view, approaching through a gate
 That opened from the enclosure of green fields
 Into the rough uncultivated ground,
 Behold the Man whom he had fancied dead !
 I knew from his deportment, mien, and dress,
 That it could be no other ; a pale face,
 A meagre person, tall, and in a garb 500
 Not rustic—dull and faded like himself !
 He saw us not, though distant but few steps ;
 For he was busy, dealing, from a store
 Upon a broad leaf carried, choicest strings
 Of red ripe currants ; gift by which he strove,
 With intermixture of endearing words,
 To soothe a Child, who walked beside him, weeping
 As if disconsolate.—' They to the grave
 Are bearing him, my Little-one,' he said,
 ' To the dark pit ; but he will feel no pain ; 510
 His body is at rest, his soul in heaven.'

More might have followed—but my honoured Friend
 Broke in upon the Speaker with a frank
 And cordial greeting.—Vivid was the light
 That flashed and sparkled from the other's eyes ;
 He was all fire : no shadow on his brow
 Remained, nor sign of sickness on his face.
 Hands joined he with his Visitant,—a grasp,
 An eager grasp ; and many moments' space—
 When the first glow of pleasure was no more, 520
 And, of the sad appearance which at once
 Had vanished, much was come and coming back—
 An amicable smile retained the life
 Which it had unexpectedly received,
 Upon his hollow cheek. ' How kind,' he said,

'Nor could your coming have been better timed ;
 For this, you see, is in our narrow world
 A day of sorrow. I have here a charge'—
 And, speaking thus, he patted tenderly
 The sun-burnt forehead of the weeping child— 530
 'A little mourner, whom it is my task
 To comfort ;—but how came ye ?—if yon track
 (Which doth at once befriend us and betray)
 Conducted hither your most welcome feet,
 Ye could not miss the funeral train—they yet
 Have scarcely disappeared.' 'This blooming Child,'
 Said the old Man, 'is of an age to weep
 At any grave or solemn spectacle,
 Inly distressed or overpowered with awe,
 He knows not wherefore ;—but the boy to-day 540
 Perhaps is shedding orphan's tears ; you also
 Must have sustained a loss.'—'The hand of Death,'
 He answered, 'has been here ; but could not well
 Have fallen more lightly, if it had not fallen
 Upon myself.' The other left these words
 Unnoticed, thus continuing.—

'From yon crag
 Down whose steep sides we dropped into the vale,
 We heard the hymn they sang—a solemn sound
 Heard anywhere ; but in a place like this
 'Tis more than human ! Many precious rites 550
 And customs of our rural ancestry
 Are gone, or stealing from us ; this, I hope,
 Will last for ever. Oft on my way have I
 Stood still, though but a casual passenger,
 So much I felt the awfulness of life,
 In that one moment when the corse is lifted
 In silence, with a hush of decency ;
 Then from the threshold moves with song of peace,
 And confidential yearnings, tow'rd its home,
 Its final home on earth. What traveller—who— 560
 (How far soe'er a stranger) does not own
 The bond of brotherhood, when he sees them go,
 A mute procession on the houseless road ;
 Or passing by some single tenement
 Or clustered dwellings, where again they raise
 The monitory voice ? But most of all
 It touches, it confirms, and elevates,
 Then, when the body, soon to be consigned
 Ashes to ashes, dust bequeathed to dust,
 Is raised from the church-aisle, and forward borne 570
 Upon the shoulders of the next in love,

The nearest in affection or in blood ;
 Yea, by the very mourners who had knelt
 Beside the coffin, resting on its lid
 In silent grief their unuplifted heads,
 And heard meanwhile the Psalmist's mournful plaint,
 And that most awful scripture which declares
 We shall not sleep, but we shall all be changed !
 —Have I not seen—ye likewise may have seen—
 Son, husband, brothers—brothers side by side, 580
 And son and father also side by side,
 Rise from that posture :—and in concert move
 On the green turf following the vested Priest,
 Four dear supporters of one senseless weight,
 From which they do not shrink, and under which
 They faint not, but advance towards the open grave
 Step after step—together, with their firm
 Unhidden faces: he that suffers most,
 He outwardly, and inwardly perhaps,
 The most serene, with most undaunted eye !— 590
 Oh ! blest are they who live and die like these,
 Loved with such love, and with such sorrow mourned !'

'That poor Man taken hence to-day,' replied
 The Solitary, with a faint sarcastic smile
 Which did not please me, 'must be deemed, I fear,
 Of the unblest ; for he will surely sink
 Into his mother earth without such pomp
 Of grief, depart without occasion given
 By him for such array of fortitude.
 Full seventy winters hath he lived, and mark ! 600
 This simple Child will mourn his one short hour,
 And I shall miss him ; scanty tribute ! yet,
 This wanting, he would leave the sight of men,
 If love were his sole claim upon their care,
 Like a ripe date which in the desert falls
 Without a hand to gather it.'

At this
 I interposed, though loth to speak, and said,
 'Can it be thus among so small a band
 As ye must needs be here ? in such a place
 I would not willingly, methinks, lose sight 610
 Of a departing cloud.'—'Twas not for love'—
 Answered the sick Man with a careless voice—
 'That I came hither ; neither have I found
 Among associates who have power of speech,
 Nor in such other converse as is here,
 Temptation so prevailing as to change

That mood, or undermine my first resolve.
 Then, speaking in like careless sort, he said
 To my benign Companion,—‘Pity ’tis
 That fortune did not guide you to this house 620
 A few days earlier; then would you have seen
 What stuff the Dwellers in a solitude,
 That seems by Nature hollowed out to be
 The seat and bosom of pure innocence,
 Are made of; an ungracious matter this!
 Which, for truth’s sake, yet in remembrance too
 Of past discussions with this zealous friend
 And advocate of humble life, I now
 Will force upon his notice; undeterred
 By the example of his own pure course, 630
 And that respect and deference which a soul
 May fairly claim, by niggard age enriched
 In what she most doth value, love of God
 And his frail creature Man;—but ye shall hear.
 I talk—and ye are standing in the sun
 Without refreshment!’

Quickly had he spoken,
 And, with light steps still quicker than his words,
 Led toward the Cottage. Homely was the spot;
 And, to my feeling, ere we reached the door,
 Had almost a forbidding nakedness; 640
 Less fair, I grant, even painfully less fair,
 Than it appeared when from the beetling rock
 We had looked down upon it. All within,
 As left by the departed company,
 Was silent; save the solitary clock
 That on mine ear ticked with a mournful sound.—
 Following our Guide, we clomb the cottage-stairs
 And reached a small apartment dark and low,
 Which was no sooner entered than our Host
 Said gaily, ‘This is my domain, my cell, 650
 My hermitage, my cabin, what you will—
 I love it better than a snail his house.
 But now ye shall be feasted with our best.’

So, with more ardour than an unripe girl
 Left one day mistress of her mother’s stores,
 He went about his hospitable task.
 My eyes were busy, and my thoughts no less,
 And pleased I looked upon my grey-haired Friend,
 As if to thank him; he returned that look,
 Cheered, plainly, and yet serious. What a wreck 660
 Had we about us! scattered was the floor,

And, in like sort, chair, window-seat, and shelf,
 With books, maps, fossils, withered plants and flowers,
 And tufts of mountain moss. Mechanic tools
 Lay intermixed with scraps of paper, some
 Scribbled with verse: a broken angling-rod
 And shattered telescope, together linked
 By cobwebs, stood within a dusty nook ;
 And instruments of music, some half-made,
 Some in disgrace, hung dangling from the walls. 670
 But speedily the promise was fulfilled ;
 A feast before us, and a courteous Host
 Inviting us in glee to sit and eat.
 A napkin, white as foam of that rough brook
 By which it had been bleached, o'erspread the board ;
 And was itself half-covered with a store
 Of dainties,—oaten bread, curd, cheese, and cream ;
 And cakes of butter curiously embossed,
 Butter that had imbibed from meadow-flowers
 A golden hue, delicate as their own 680
 Faintly reflected in a lingering stream.
 Nor lacked, for more delight on that warm day,
 Our table small parade of garden fruits,
 And whortle-berries from the mountain side.
 The Child, who long ere this had stilled his sobs,
 Was now a help to his late comforter,
 And moved, a willing Page, as he was bid,
 Ministering to our need.

In genial mood,
 While at our pastoral banquet thus we sate
 Fronting the window of that little cell, 690
 I could not, ever and anon, forbear
 To glance an upward look on two huge Peaks,
 That from some other vale peered into this.
 'Those lusty twins,' exclaimed our host, 'if here
 It were your lot to dwell, would soon become
 Your prized companions.—Many are the notes
 Which, in his tuneful course, the wind draws forth
 From rocks, woods, caverns, heaths, and dashing shores ;
 And well those lofty brethren bear their part
 In the wild concert—chiefly when the storm 700
 Rides high ; then all the upper air they fill
 With roaring sound, that ceases not to flow,
 Like smoke, along the level of the blast,
 In mighty current ; theirs, too, is the song
 Of stream and headlong flood that seldom fails ;
 And, in the grim and breathless hour of noon,
 Methinks that I have heard them echo back

The thunder's greeting. Nor have nature's laws
 Left them ungifted with a power to yield
 Music of finer tone ; a harmony, 710
 So do I call it, though it be the hand
 Of silence, though there be no voice ;—the clouds,
 The mist, the shadows, light of golden suns,
 Motions of moonlight, all come thither—touch,
 And have an answer—thither come, and shape
 A language not unwelcome to sick hearts
 And idle spirits :—there the sun himself,
 At the calm close of summer's longest day,
 Rests his substantial orb ;—between those heights
 And on the top of either pinnacle, 720
 More keenly than elsewhere in night's blue vault,
 Sparkle the stars, as of their station proud.
 Thoughts are not busier in the mind of man
 Than the mute agents stirring there :—alone
 Here do I sit and watch.—'

A fall of voice,
 Regretted like the nightingale's last note,
 Had scarcely closed this high-wrought strain of rapture
 Ere with inviting smile the Wanderer said :
 ' Now for the tale with which you threatened us !'
 ' In truth the threat escaped me unawares : 730
 Should the tale tire you, let this challenge stand
 For my excuse. Dissevered from mankind,
 As to your eyes and thoughts we must have seemed
 When ye looked down upon us from the crag,
 Islanders 'mid a stormy mountain sea,
 We are not so ;—perpetually we touch
 Upon the vulgar ordinances of the world ;
 And he, whom this our cottage hath to-day
 Relinquished, lived dependent for his bread
 Upon the laws of public charity. 740
 The Housewife, tempted by such slender gains
 As might from that occasion be distilled,
 Opened, as she before had done for me,
 Her doors to admit this homeless Pensioner ;
 The portion gave of coarse but wholesome fare
 Which appetite required—a blind dull nook,
 Such as she had, the *kennel* of his rest !
 This, in itself not ill, would yet have been
 Ill borne in earlier life ; but his was now
 The still contentedness of seventy years. 750
 Calm did he sit under the wide-spread tree
 Of his old age ; and yet less calm and meek,
 Winningly meek or venerably calm,

Than slow and torpid ; paying in this wise
A penalty, if penalty it were,
For spendthrift feats, excesses of his prime.
I loved the old Man, for I pitied him !
A task it was, I own, to hold discourse
With one so slow in gathering up his thoughts,
But he was a cheap pleasure to my eyes ; 760
Mild, inoffensive, ready in *his* way,
And helpful to his utmost power : and there
Our housewife knew full well what she possessed !
He was her vassal of all labour, tilled
Her garden, from the pasture fetched her kine ;
And, one among the orderly array
Of hay-makers, beneath the burning sun
Maintained his place ; or heedfully pursued
His course, on errands bound, to other vales,
Leading sometimes an inexperienced child 770
Too young for any profitable task.
So moved he like a shadow that performed
Substantial service. Mark me now, and learn
For what reward !—The moon her monthly round
Hath not completed since our dame, the queen
Of this one cottage and this lonely dale,
Into my little sanctuary rushed—
Voice to a rueful treble humanised,
And features in deplorable dismay.
I treat the matter lightly, but, alas ! 780
It is most serious : persevering rain
Had fallen in torrents ; all the mountain tops
Were hidden, and black vapours coursed their sides ;
This had I seen, and saw ; but, till she spake,
Was wholly ignorant that my ancient Friend—
Who at her bidding early and alone,
Had clomb aloft to delve the moorland turf
For winter fuel—to his noontide meal
Returned not, and now, haply, on the heights
Lay at the mercy of this raging storm. 790
' Inhuman ! '—said I, ' was an old Man's life
Not worth the trouble of a thought ?—alas !
This notice comes too late.' With joy I saw
Her husband enter—from a distant vale.
We sallied forth together ; found the tools
Which the neglected veteran had dropped,
But through all quarters looked for him in vain.
We shouted—but no answer ! Darkness fell
Without remission of the blast or shower,
And fears for our own safety drove us home. 800

'I, who weep little, did, I will confess,
 The moment I was seated here alone,
 Honour my little cell with some few tears
 Which anger and resentment could not dry.
 All night the storm endured : and, soon as help
 Had been collected from the neighbouring vale,
 With morning we renewed our quest : the wind
 Was fallen, the rain abated, but the hills
 Lay shrouded in impenetrable mist ;
 And long and hopelessly we sought in vain : 810
 Till, chancing on that lofty ridge to pass
 A heap of ruin—almost without walls
 And wholly without roof (the bleached remains
 Of a small chapel, where, in ancient time,
 The peasants of these lonely valleys used
 To meet for worship on that central height)—
 We there espied the object of our search,
 Lying full three parts buried among tufts
 Of heath-plant, under and above him strewn,
 To baffle, as he might, the watery storm : 820
 And there we found him breathing peaceably,
 Snug as a child that hides itself in sport
 'Mid a green hay-cock in a sunny field.
 We spake—he made reply, but would not stir
 At our entreaty ; less from want of power
 Than apprehension and bewildering thoughts.

'So was he lifted gently from the ground,
 And with their freight homeward the shepherds
 moved
 Through the dull mist, I following—when a step,
 A single step, that freed me from the skirts 830
 Of the blind vapour, opened to my view
 Glory beyond all glory ever seen
 By waking sense or by the dreaming soul !
 The appearance, instantaneously disclosed,
 Was of a mighty city—boldly say
 A wilderness of building, sinking far
 And self-withdrawn into a boundless depth,
 Far sinking into splendor—without end !
 Fabric it seemed of diamond and of gold,
 With alabaster domes, and silver spires, 840
 And blazing terrace upon terrace, high
 Uplifted ; here, serene pavilions bright,
 In avenues disposed ; there, towers begirt
 With battlements that on their restless fronts
 Bore stars—illumination of all gems !

By earthly nature had the effect been wrought
 Upon the dark materials of the storm
 Now pacified ; on them, and on the coves
 And mountain-steeps and summits, whereunto
 The vapours had receded, taking there 850
 Their station under a cerulean sky.

Oh, 'twas an unimaginable sight !
 Clouds, mists, streams, watery rocks and emerald turf,
 Clouds of all tincture, rocks and sapphire sky,
 Confused, commingled, mutually inflamed,
 Molten together, and composing thus,
 Each lost in each, that marvellous array
 Of temple, palace, citadel, and huge
 Fantastic pomp of structure without name,
 In fleecy folds voluminous, enwrapped. 860

Right in the midst, where interspace appeared
 Of open court, an object like a throne
 Under a shining canopy of state
 Stood fixed ; and fixed resemblances were seen
 To implements of ordinary use,
 But vast in size, in substance glorified ;
 Such as by Hebrew Prophets were beheld
 In vision—forms uncouth of mightiest power
 For admiration and mysterious awe.

This little Vale, a dwelling-place of Man, 870
 Lay low beneath my feet ; 'twas visible—
 I saw not, but I felt that it was there.

That which I *saw* was the revealed abode
 Of Spirits in beatitude : my heart
 Swelled in my breast.—“ I have been dead,” I cried,
 “ And now I live ! Oh ! wherefore *do* I live ? ”
 And with that pang I prayed to be no more !—
 —But I forget our Charge, as utterly
 I then forgot him :—there I stood and gazed :
 The apparition faded not away, 880
 And I descended.

Having reached the house,
 I found its rescued inmate safely lodged,
 And in serene possession of himself,
 Beside a fire whose genial warmth seemed met
 By a faint shining from the heart, a gleam
 Of comfort, spread over his pallid face.
 Great show of joy the housewife made, and truly
 Was glad to find her conscience set at ease ;
 And not less glad, for sake of her good name,
 That the poor Sufferer had escaped with life. 890
 But, though he seemed at first to have received

No harm, and uncomplaining as before
 Went through his usual tasks, a silent change
 Soon showed itself: he lingered three short weeks;
 And from the cottage hath been borne to-day.

‘So ends my dolorous tale, and glad I am
 That it is ended.’ At these words he turned—
 And, with blithe air of open fellowship,
 Brought from the cupboard wine and stouter cheer,
 Like one who would be merry. Seeing this, 900
 My grey-haired Friend said courteously—‘Nay, nay,
 You have regaled us as a hermit ought;
 Now let us forth into the sun!’—Our Host
 Rose, though reluctantly, and forth we went.

BOOK THIRD

DESPONDENCY

ARGUMENT

IMAGES in the Valley.—Another Recess in it entered and described.—Wanderer's sensations.—Solitary's excited by the same objects.—Contrast between these.—Despondency of the Solitary gently reprov'd.—Conversation exhibiting the Solitary's past and present opinions and feelings, till he enters upon his own History at length.—His domestic felicity.—Afflictions.—Dejection.—Roused by the French Revolution.—Disappointment and disgust.—Voyage to America.—Disappointment and disgust pursue him.—His return.—His languor and depression of mind, from want of faith in the great truths of Religion, and want of confidence in the virtue of Mankind.

A HUMMING BEE—a little tinkling rill—
 A pair of falcons wheeling on the wing,
 In clamorous agitation, round the crest
 Of a tall rock, their airy citadel—
 By each and all of these the pensive ear
 Was greeted, in the silence that ensued,
 When through the cottage-threshold we had passed,
 And, deep within that lonesome valley, stood
 Once more beneath the concave of a blue
 And cloudless sky.—Anon exclaimed our Host, 10
 Triumphantly dispersing with the taunt
 The shade of discontent which on his brow
 Had gathered,—‘Ye have left my cell,—but see

How Nature hems you in with friendly arms !
And by her help ye are my prisoners still.
But which way shall I lead you ?—how contrive,
In spot so parsimoniously endowed,
That the brief hours, which yet remain, may reap
Some recompense of knowledge or delight ?'
So saying, round he looked, as if perplexed ; 20
And, to remove those doubts, my grey-haired Friend
Said—' Shall we take this pathway for our guide ?—
Upward it winds, as if, in summer heats,
Its line had first been fashioned by the flock
Seeking a place of refuge at the root
Of yon black Yew-tree, whose protruded boughs
Darken the silver bosom of the crag,
From which she draws her meagre sustenance.
There in commodious shelter may we rest.
Or let us trace this streamlet to its source ; 30
Feebly it tinkles with an earthy sound,
And a few steps may bring us to the spot
Where, haply, crowned with flowerets and green herbs,
The mountain infant to the sun comes forth,
Like human life from darkness.'—A quick turn
Through a strait passage of encumbered ground
Proved that such hope was vain :—for now we stood
Shut out from prospect of the open vale,
And saw the water, that composed this rill,
Descending, disembodied, and diffused 40
O'er the smooth surface of an ample crag,
Lofty, and steep, and naked as a tower.
All further progress here was barred ;—And who,
Thought I, if master of a vacant hour,
Here would not linger, willingly detained ?
Whether to such wild objects he were led
When copious rains have magnified the stream
Into a loud and white-robed waterfall,
Or introduced at this more quiet time.

Upon a semicirque of turf-clad ground, 50
The hidden nook discovered to our view
A mass of rock, resembling, as it lay
Right at the foot of that moist precipice,
A stranded ship, with keel upturned, that rests
Fearless of winds and waves. Three several stones
Stood near, of smaller size, and not unlike
To monumental pillars : and, from these
Some little space disjoined, a pair were seen,
That with united shoulders bore aloft

A fragment, like an altar, flat and smooth :
 Barren the tablet, yet thereon appeared
 A tall and shining holly, that had found
 A hospitable chink, and stood upright,
 As if inserted by some human hand
 In mockery, to wither in the sun,
 Or lay its beauty flat before a breeze,
 The first that entered. But no breeze did now
 Find entrance ;—high or low appeared no trace
 Of motion, save the water that descended,
 Diffused adown that barrier of steep rock,
 And softly creeping, like a breath of air,
 Such as is sometimes seen, and hardly seen,
 To brush the still breast of a crystal lake.

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‘ Behold a cabinet for sages built,
 Which kings might envy ! ’—Praise to this effect
 Broke from the happy old Man’s reverend lip ;
 Who to the Solitary turned, and said,
 ‘ In sooth, with love’s familiar privilege,
 You have decried the wealth which is your own.
 Among these rocks and stones, methinks, I see
 More than the heedless impress that belongs
 To lonely nature’s casual work : they bear
 A semblance strange of power intelligent,
 And of design not wholly worn away.
 Boldest of plants that ever faced the wind,
 How gracefully that slender shrub looks forth
 From its fantastic birthplace ! And I own,
 Some shadowy intimations haunt me here,
 That in these shows a chronicle survives
 Of purposes akin to those of Man,
 But wrought with mightier arm than now prevails.
 —Voiceless the stream descends into the gulf
 With timid lapse ;—and lo ! while in the strait
 I stand—the chasm of sky above my head
 Is heaven’s profoundest azure ; no domain
 For fickle, short-lived clouds to occupy,
 Or to pass through ; but rather an abyss
 In which the everlasting stars abide ;
 And whose soft gloom, and boundless depth, might
 tempt
 The curious eye to look for them by day.
 —Hail Contemplation ! from the stately towers,
 Reared by the industrious hand of human art
 To lift thee high above the misty air
 And turbulence of murmuring cities vast ;

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From academic groves, that have for thee
 Been planted, hither come and find a lodge
 To which thou may'st resort for holier peace,—
 From whose calm centre thou, through height or depth,
 May'st penetrate, wherever truth shall lead ;
 Measuring through all degrees, until the scale 110
 Of time and conscious nature disappear,
 Lost in unsearchable eternity !'

A pause ensued ; and with minuter care
 We scanned the various features of the scene :
 And soon the Tenant of that lonely vale
 With courteous voice thus spake—

'I should have grieved

Hereafter, not escaping self-reproach,
 If from my poor retirement ye had gone
 Leaving this nook unvisited : but, in sooth,
 Your unexpected presence had so roused 120
 My spirits, that they were bent on enterprise ;
 And, like an ardent hunter, I forgot,
 Or, shall I say ?—disdained, the game that lurks
 At my own door. The shapes before our eyes
 And their arrangement, doubtless must be deemed
 The sport of Nature, aided by blind Chance
 Rudely to mock the works of toiling Man.
 And hence, this upright shaft of unhewn stone,
 From Fancy, willing to set off her stores
 By sounding titles, hath acquired the name 130
 Of Pompey's pillar ; that I gravely style
 My Theban obelisk ; and, there, behold
 A Druid cromlech !—thus I entertain
 The antiquarian humour, and am pleased
 To skim along the surfaces of things,
 Beguiling harmlessly the listless hours.
 But if the spirit be oppressed by sense
 Of instability, revolt, decay,
 And change, and emptiness, these freaks of Nature
 And her blind helper Chance, do *then* suffice 140
 To quicken, and to aggravate—to feed
 Pity and scorn, and melancholy pride,
 Not less than that huge Pile (from some abyss
 Of mortal power unquestionably sprung)
 Whose hoary diadem of pendent rocks
 Confines the shrill-voiced whirlwind, round and round
 Eddying within its vast circumference,
 On Sarum's naked plain—than pyramid
 Of Egypt, unsubverted, undissolved—

Or Syria's marble ruins towering high 150
 Above the sandy desert, in the light
 Of sun or moon.—Forgive me, if I say
 That an appearance which hath raised your minds
 To an exalted pitch (the self-same cause
 Different effect producing) is for me
 Fraught rather with depression than delight,
 Though shame it were, could I not look around,
 By the reflection of your pleasure, pleased.
 Yet happier, in my judgment, even than you
 With your bright transports, fairly may be deemed, 160
 The wandering Herbalist,—who, clear alike
 From vain, and, that worse evil, vexing thoughts,
 Casts, if he ever chance to enter here,
 Upon these uncouth Forms a slight regard
 Of transitory interest, and peeps round
 For some rare floweret of the hills, or plant
 Of craggy fountain; what he hopes for wins,
 Or learns, at least, that 'tis not to be won :
 Then, keen and eager, as a fine-nosed hound
 By soul-engrossing instinct driven along 170
 Through wood or open field, the harmless Man
 Departs, intent upon his onward quest !—
 Nor is that Fellow-wanderer, so deem I,
 Less to be envied, (you may trace him oft
 By scars which his activity has left
 Beside our roads and pathways, though, thank Heaven !
 This covert nook reports not of his hand)
 He who with pocket-hammer smites the edge
 Of luckless rock or prominent stone, disguised
 In weather-stains or crusted o'er by Nature 180
 With her first growths, detaching by the stroke
 A chip or splinter—to resolve his doubts;
 And, with that ready answer satisfied,
 The substance classes by some barbarous name,
 And hurries on; or from the fragments picks
 His specimen, if but haply interveined
 With sparkling mineral, or should crystal cube
 Lurk in its cells—and thinks himself enriched,
 Wealthier, and doubtless wiser, than before !
 Intrusted safely each to his pursuit, 190
 Earnest alike, let both from hill to hill
 Range; if it please them, speed from clime to clime;
 The mind is full—and free from pain their pastime.'

'Then,' said I, interposing, 'One is near,
 Who cannot but possess in your esteem

Place worthier still of envy. May I name,
 Without offence, that fair-faced cottage-boy?
 Dame Nature's pupil of the lowest form,
 Youngest apprentice in the school of art!
 Him, as we entered from the open glen, 200
 You might have noticed, busily engaged,
 Heart, soul, and hands,—in mending the defects
 Left in the fabric of a leaky dam
 Raised for enabling this penurious stream
 To turn a slender mill (that new-made plaything)
 For his delight—the happiest he of all!

'Far happiest,' answered the desponding Man,
 'If, such as now he is, he might remain!
 Ah! what avails imagination high
 Or question deep? what profits all that earth, 210
 Or heaven's blue vault, is suffered to put forth
 Of impulse or allurement, for the Soul
 To quit the beaten track of life, and soar
 Far as she finds a yielding element
 In past or future; far as she can go
 Through time or space—if neither in the one,
 Nor in the other region, nor in aught
 That Fancy, dreaming o'er the map of things,
 Hath placed beyond these penetrable bounds,
 Words of assurance can be heard; if nowhere 220
 A habitation, for consummate good,
 Or for progressive virtue, by the search
 Can be attained,—a better sanctuary
 From doubt and sorrow, than the senseless grave?'

'Is this,' the grey-haired Wanderer mildly said,
 'The voice, which we so lately overheard,
 To that same child, addressing tenderly
 The consolations of a hopeful mind?
 'His body is at rest, his soul in heaven.'
 These were your words; and, verily, methinks 230
 Wisdom is oft-times nearer when we stoop
 Than when we soar.'—

The Other, not displeased,
 Promptly replied—'My notion is the same.
 And I, without reluctance, could decline
 All act of inquisition whence we rise,
 And what, when breath hath ceased, we may become.
 Here are we, in a bright and breathing world.
 Our origin, what matters it? In lack
 Of worthier explanation, say at once
 With the American (a thought which suits 240

The place where now we stand) that certain men
 Leapt out together from a rocky cave;
 And these were the first parents of mankind:
 Or, if a different image be recalled
 By the warm sunshine, and the jocund voice
 Of insects chirping out their careless lives
 On these soft beds of thyme-besprinkled turf,
 Choose, with the gay Athenian, a conceit
 As sound—blithe race! whose mantles were bedecked
 With golden grasshoppers, in sign that they 250
 Had sprung, like those bright creatures, from the soil
 Whereon their endless generations dwelt.
 But stop! these theoretic fancies jar
 On serious minds: then, as the Hindoos draw
 Their holy Ganges from a skiey fount,
 Even so deduce the stream of human life
 From seats of power divine; and hope, or trust,
 That our existence winds her stately course
 Beneath the sun, like Ganges, to make part
 Of a living ocean; or, to sink engulfed, 260
 Like Niger, in impenetrable sands
 And utter darkness: thought which may be faced,
 Though comfortless!—

Not of myself I speak;
 Such acquiescence neither doth imply,
 In me, a meekly-bending spirit soothed
 By natural piety; nor a lofty mind,
 By philosophic discipline prepared
 For calm subjection to acknowledged law;
 Pleased to have been, contented not to be.
 Such palms I boast not;—no! to me, who find, 270
 Reviewing my past way, much to condemn,
 Little to praise, and nothing to regret
 (Save some remembrances of dream-like joys
 That scarcely seem to have belonged to me),
 If I must take my choice between the pair
 That rule alternately the weary hours,
 Night is than day more acceptable; sleep
 Doth, in my estimate of good, appear
 A better state than waking; death than sleep:
 Feelingly sweet is stillness after storm, 280
 Though under covert of the wormy ground!

'Yet be it said, in justice to myself,
 That in more genial times, when I was free
 To explore the destiny of human kind
 (Not as an intellectual game pursued

With curious subtilty, from wish to cheat
 Irksome sensations ; but by love of truth
 Urged on, or haply by intense delight
 In feeding thought, wherever thought could feed)
 I did not rank with those (too dull or nice, 290
 For to my judgment such they then appeared,
 Or too aspiring, thankless at the best)
 Who, in this frame of human life, perceive
 An object whereunto their souls are tied
 In discontented wedlock ; nor did e'er,
 From me, those dark impervious shades, that hang
 Upon the region whither we are bound,
 Exclude a power to enjoy the vital beams
 Of present sunshine.—Deities that float
 On wings, angelic Spirits ! I could muse 300
 O'er what from eldest time we have been told
 Of your bright forms and glorious faculties,
 And with the imagination rest content,
 Not wishing more ; repining not to tread
 The little sinuous path of earthly care,
 By flowers embellished, and by springs refreshed.
 —' Blow winds of autumn !—let your chilling breath
 Take the live herbage from the mead, and strip
 The shady forest of its green attire,—
 And let the bursting clouds to fury rouse 310
 The gentle brooks !—Your desolating sway,
 Sheds,' I exclaimed, ' no sadness upon me,
 And no disorder in your rage I find.
 What dignity, what beauty, in this change
 From mild to angry, and from sad to gay,
 Alternate and revolving ! How benign,
 How rich in animation and delight,
 How bountiful these elements—compared
 With aught, as more desirable and fair,
 Devised by fancy for the golden age ; 320
 Or the perpetual warbling that prevails
 In Arcady, beneath unaltered skies,
 Through the long year in constant quiet bound,
 Night hushed as night, and day serene as day !'
 —But why this tedious record ?—Age, we know,
 Is garrulous ; and solitude is apt
 To anticipate the privilege of Age.
 From far ye come ; and surely with a hope
 Of better entertainment :—let us hence !'

Loth to forsake the spot, and still more loth 330
 To be diverted from our present theme,

I said, ' My thoughts, agreeing, Sir, with yours,
 Would push this censure farther ;—for, if smiles
 Of scornful pity be the just reward
 Of Poesy thus courteously employed
 In framing models to improve the scheme
 Of Man's existence, and recast the world,
 Why should not grave Philosophy be styled,
 Herself, a dreamer of a kindred stock,
 A dreamer yet more spiritless and dull ?
 Yes, shall the fine immunities she boasts
 Establish sounder titles of esteem
 For her, who (all too timid and reserved
 For onset, for resistance too inert,
 Too weak for suffering, and for hope too tame)
 Placed, among flowery gardens curtained round
 With world-excluding groves, the brotherhood
 Of soft Epicureans, taught—if they
 The ends of being would secure, and win
 The crown of wisdom—to yield up their souls
 To a voluptuous unconcern, preferring
 Tranquillity to all things. Or is she,
 I cried, ' more worthy of regard, the Power,
 Who, for the sake of sterner quiet, closed
 The Stoic's heart against the vain approach
 Of admiration, and all sense of joy ? '

His countenance gave notice that my zeal
 Accorded little with his present mind ;
 I ceased, and he resumed.—' Ah ! gentle Sir,
 Slight, if you will, the *means* ; but spare to slight
 The *end* of those, who did, by system, rank,
 As the prime object of a wise man's aim,
 Security from shock of accident,
 Release from fear ; and cherished peaceful days
 For their own sakes, as mortal life's chief good,
 And only reasonable felicity.
 What motive drew, what impulse, I would ask,
 Through a long course of later ages, drove,
 The hermit to his cell in forest wide ;
 Or what detained him, till his closing eyes
 Took their last farewell of the sun and stars,
 Fast anchored in the desert ?—Not alone
 Dread of the persecuting sword, remorse,
 Wrongs unredressed, or insults unavenged
 And unavengeable, defeated pride,
 Prosperity subverted, maddening want,
 Friendship betrayed, affection unreturned,

Love with despair, or grief in agony ;—
 Not always from intolerable pangs
 He fled ; but, compassed round by pleasure, sighed 380
 For independent happiness ; craving peace,
 The central feeling of all happiness,
 Not as a refuge from distress or pain,
 A breathing-time, vacation, or a truce,
 But for its absolute self ; a life of peace,
 Stability without regret or fear ;
 That hath been, is, and shall be evermore !—
 Such the reward he sought ; and wore out life,
 There, where on few external things his heart
 Was set, and those his own ; or, if not his, 390
 Subsisting under nature's steadfast law.

' What other yearning was the master tie
 Of the monastic brotherhood, upon rock
 Aërial, or in green secluded vale,
 One after one, collected from afar,
 An undissolving fellowship ?—What but this,
 The universal instinct of repose,
 The longing for confirmed tranquillity,
 Inward and outward ; humble, yet sublime :
 The life where hope and memory are as one ; 400
 Where earth is quiet and her face unchanged
 Save by the simplest toil of human hands
 Or seasons' difference ; the immortal Soul
 Consistent in self-rule ; and heaven revealed
 To meditation in that quietness !—
 Such was their scheme : and though the wished-for end
 By multitudes was missed, perhaps attained
 By none, they for the attempt, and pains employed,
 Do, in my present censure, stand redeemed
 From the unqualified disdain, that once 410
 Would have been cast upon them by my voice
 Delivering her decisions from the seat
 Of forward youth—that scruples not to solve
 Doubts, and determine questions, by the rules
 Of inexperienced judgment, ever prone
 To overweening faith ; and is inflamed,
 By courage, to demand from real life
 The test of act and suffering, to provoke
 Hostility—how dreadful when it comes,
 Whether affliction be the foe, or guilt ! 420

' A child of earth, I rested, in that stage
 Of my past course to which these thoughts advert,

Upon earth's native energies ; forgetting
 That mine was a condition which required
 Nor energy, nor fortitude—a calm
 Without vicissitude ; which, if the like
 Had been presented to my view elsewhere,
 I might have even been tempted to despise.
 But no—for the serene was also bright ;
 Enlivened happiness with joy o'erflowing, 430
 With joy, and—oh ! that memory should survive
 To speak the word—with rapture ! Nature's boon,
 Life's genuine inspiration, happiness
 Above what rules can teach, or fancy feign ;
 Abused, as all possessions *are* abused
 That are not prized according to their worth.
 And yet, what worth ? what good is given to men,
 More solid than the gilded clouds of heaven ?
 What joy more lasting than a vernal flower ?—
 None ! 'tis the general plaint of human kind 440
 In solitude : and mutually addressed
 From each to all, for wisdom's sake :—This truth
 The priest announces from his holy seat :
 And, crowned with garlands in the summer grove,
 The poet fits it to his pensive lyre.
 Yet, ere that final resting-place be gained,
 Sharp contradictions may arise, by doom
 Of this same life, compelling us to grieve
 That the prosperities of love and joy
 Should be permitted, oft-times, to endure 450
 So long, and be at once cast down for ever.
 Oh ! tremble, ye, to whom hath been assigned
 A course of days composing happy months,
 And they as happy years ; the present still
 So like the past, and both so firm a pledge
 Of a congenial future, that the wheels
 Of pleasure move without the aid of hope :
 For Mutability is Nature's bane ;
 And slighted Hope *will* be avenged ; and, when
 Ye need her favours, ye shall find her not ; 460
 But in her stead—fear—doubt—and agony !'

This was the bitter language of the heart :
 But, while he spake, look, gesture, tone of voice,
 Though discomposed and vehement, were such
 As skill and graceful nature might suggest
 To a proficient of the tragic scene
 Standing before the multitude, beset
 With dark events. Desirous to divert

Or stem the current of the speaker's thoughts,
 We signified a wish to leave that place
 Of stillness and close privacy, a nook
 That seemed for self-examination made;
 Or, for confession, in the sinner's need,
 Hidden from all men's view. To our attempt
 He yielded not; but, pointing to a slope
 Of mossy turf defended from the sun,
 And on that couch inviting us to rest,
 Full on that tender-hearted Man he turned
 A serious eye, and his speech thus renewed.

470

' You never saw, your eyes did never look
 On the bright form of Her whom once I loved :—
 Her silver voice was heard upon the earth,
 A sound unknown to you ; else, honoured Friend !
 Your heart had borne a pitiable share
 Of what I suffered, when I wept that loss,
 And suffer now, not seldom, from the thought
 That I remember, and can weep no more.—
 Stripped as I am of all the golden fruit
 Of self-esteem, and by the cutting blasts
 Of self-reproach familiarly assailed ;
 Yet would I not be of such wintry bareness
 But that some leaf of your regard should hang
 Upon my naked branches :—lively thoughts
 Give birth, full often, to unguarded words ;
 I grieve that, in your presence, from my tongue
 Too much of frailty hath already dropped ;
 But that too much demands still more.

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You know,

Revered Compatriot—and to you, kind Sir,
 (Not to be deemed a stranger, as you come
 Following the guidance of these welcome feet
 To our secluded vale) it may be told—
 That my demerits did not sue in vain
 To One on whose mild radiance many gazed
 With hope, and all with pleasure. This fair Bride—
 In the devotedness of youthful love,
 Preferring me to parents, and the choir
 Of gay companions, to the natal roof,
 And all known places and familiar sights
 (Resigned with sadness gently weighing down
 Her trembling expectations, but no more
 Than did to her due honour, and to me
 Yielded, that day, a confidence sublime
 In what I had to build upon)—this Bride,

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Young, modest, meek, and beautiful, I led
 To a low cottage in a sunny bay,
 Where the salt sea innocuously breaks,
 And the sea breeze as innocently breathes,
 On Devon's leafy shores ;—a sheltered hold,
 In a soft clime encouraging the soil
 To a luxuriant bounty !—As our steps 520
 Approach the embowered abode—our chosen seat—
 See, rooted in the earth, her kindly bed,
 The unendangered myrtle, decked with flowers,
 Before the threshold stands to welcome us !
 While, in the flowering myrtle's neighbourhood,
 Not overlooked but courting no regard,
 Those native plants, the holly and the yew,
 Gave modest intimation to the mind
 How willingly their aid they would unite
 With the green myrtle, to endear the hours 530
 Of winter, and protect that pleasant place.
 —Wild were the walks upon those lonely Downs,
 Track leading into track ; how marked, how worn
 Into bright verdure, between fern and gorse,
 Winding away its never-ending line
 On their smooth surface, evidence was none :
 But, there, lay open to our daily haunt
 A range of unappropriated earth,
 Where youth's ambitious feet might move at large ;
 Whence, unmolested wanderers, we beheld 540
 The shining giver of the day diffuse
 His brightness o'er a tract of sea and land
 Gay as our spirits, free as our desires ;
 As our enjoyments, boundless.—From those heights
 We dropped, at pleasure, into sylvan combs ;
 Where arbours of impenetrable shade,
 And mossy seats, detained us side by side,
 With hearts at ease, and knowledge in our hearts
 'That all the grove and all the day was ours.'

'O happy time ! still happier was at hand ; 550
 For Nature called my Partner to resign
 Her share in the pure freedom of that life,
 Enjoyed by us in common.—To my hope,
 To my heart's wish, my tender Mate became
 The thankful captive of maternal bonds ;
 And those wild paths were left to me alone.
 There could I meditate on follies past ;
 And, like a weary voyager escaped
 From risk and hardship, inwardly retrace

A course of vain delights and thoughtless guilt, 560
 And self-indulgence—without shame pursued.
 There, undisturbed, could think of and could thank
 Her whose submissive spirit was to me
 Rule and restraint—my guardian—shall I say
 That earthly Providence, whose guiding love
 Within a port of rest had lodged me safe ;
 Safe from temptation, and from danger far ?
 Strains followed of acknowledgment addressed
 To an Authority enthroned above
 The reach of sight ; from whom, as from their source, 570
 Proceed all visible ministers of good
 That walk the earth—Father of heaven and earth,
 Father, and king, and judge, adored and feared !
 These acts of mind, and memory, and heart,
 And spirit—interrupted and relieved
 By observations transient as the glance
 Of flying sunbeams, or to the outward form
 Cleaving with power inherent and intense,
 As the mute insect fixed upon the plant
 On whose soft leaves it hangs, and from whose cup 580
 It draws its nourishment imperceptibly—
 Endeared my wanderings ; and the mother's kiss
 And infant's smile awaited my return.

' In privacy we dwelt, a wedded pair,
 Companions daily, often all day long ;
 Not placed by fortune within easy reach
 Of various intercourse, nor wishing aught
 Beyond the allowance of our own fireside,
 The twain within our happy cottage born,
 Inmates, and heirs of our united love ; 590
 Graced mutually by difference of sex,
 And with no wider interval of time
 Between their several births than served for one
 To establish something of a leader's sway ;
 Yet left them joined by sympathy in age ;
 Equals in pleasure, fellows in pursuit.
 On these two pillars rested as in air
 Our solitude.

It soothes me to perceive,
 Your courtesy withholds not from my words
 Attentive audience. But, oh ! gentle Friends, 600
 As times of quiet and unbroken peace,
 Though, for a nation, times of blessedness,
 Give back faint echoes from the historian's page ;
 So, in the imperfect sounds of this discourse,

Depressed I hear, how faithless is the voice
 Which those most blissful days reverberate.
 What special record can, or need, be given
 To rules and habits, whereby much was done,
 But all within the sphere of little things;
 Of humble, though, to us, important cares, 610
 And precious interests? Smoothly did our life
 Advance, swerving not from the path prescribed;
 Her annual, her diurnal, round alike
 Maintained with faithful care. And you divine
 The worst effects that our condition saw,
 If you imagine changes slowly wrought,
 And in their process unperceivable;
 Not wished for; sometimes noticed with a sigh,
 (Whate'er of good or lovely they might bring)
 Sighs of regret, for the familiar good 620
 And loveliness endeared which they removed.

'Seven years of occupation undisturbed
 Established seemingly a right to hold
 That happiness; and use and habit gave
 To what an alien spirit had acquired
 A patrimonial sanctity. And thus,
 With thoughts and wishes bounded to this world,
 I lived and breathed; most grateful—if to enjoy
 Without repining or desire for more,
 For different lot, or change to higher sphere, 630
 (Only except some impulses of pride
 With no determined object, though upheld
 By theories with suitable support)—
 Most grateful, if in such wise to enjoy
 Be proof of gratitude for what we have;
 Else, I allow, most thankless.—But, at once,
 From some dark seat of fatal power was urged
 A claim that shattered all.—Our blooming girl,
 Caught in the gripe of death, with such brief
 time
 To struggle in as scarcely would allow 640
 Her cheek to change its colour, was conveyed
 From us to inaccessible worlds, to regions
 Where height, or depth, admits not the approach
 Of living man, though longing to pursue.
 —With even as brief a warning—and how soon,
 With what short interval of time between,
 I tremble yet to think of—our last prop,
 Our happy life's only remaining stay—
 The brother followed; and was seen no more!

'Calm as a frozen lake when ruthless winds
 Blow fiercely, agitating earth and sky,
 The Mother now remained ; as if in her,
 Who, to the lowest region of the soul,
 Had been erewhile unsettled and disturbed,
 This second visitation had no power
 To shake ; but only to bind up and seal ;
 And to establish thankfulness of heart
 In Heaven's determinations, ever just.
 The eminence whereon her spirit stood,
 Mine was unable to attain. Immense
 The space that severed us ! But, as the sight
 Communicates with heaven's ethereal orbs
 Incalculably distant ; so, I felt
 That consolation may descend from far
 (And that is intercourse, and union, too.)
 While, overcome with speechless gratitude,
 And, with a holier love inspired, I looked
 On her—at once superior to my woes
 And partner of my loss.—O heavy change !
 Dimness o'er this clear luminary crept
 Insensibly ;—the immortal and divine
 Yielded to mortal reflux ; her pure glory,
 As from the pinnacle of worldly state
 Wretched ambition drops astounded, fell
 Into a gulf obscure of silent grief,
 And keen heart-anguish—of itself ashamed,
 Yet obstinately cherishing itself :
 And, so consumed, she melted from my arms ;
 And left me, on this earth, disconsolate !

'What followed cannot be reviewed in thought ;
 Much less, retraced in words. If she, of life
 Blameless, so intimate with love and joy
 And all the tender motions of the soul,
 Had been supplanted, could I hope to stand—
 Infirm, dependent, and now destitute ?
 I called on dreams and visions, to disclose
 That which is veiled from waking thought ; conjured
 Eternity, as men constrain a ghost
 To appear and answer ; to the grave I spake
 Imploringly ;—looked up, and asked the Heavens
 If Angels traversed their cerulean floors,
 If fixed or wandering star could tidings yield
 Of the departed spirit—what abode
 It occupies—what consciousness retains
 Of former loves and interests. Then my soul

Turned inward,—to examine of what stuff
 Time's fetters are composed ; and life was put
 To inquisition, long and profitless !
 By pain of heart—now checked—and now impelled—
 The intellectual power, through words and things, 700
 Went sounding on, a dim and perilous way !
 And from those transports, and these toils abstruse,
 Some trace am I enabled to retain
 Of time, else lost ;—existing unto me
 Only by records in myself not found.

‘ From that abstraction I was roused,—and how ?
 Even as a thoughtful shepherd by a flash
 Of lightning startled in a gloomy cave
 Of these wild hills. For, lo ! the dread Bastille,
 With all the chambers in its horrid towers, 710
 Fell to the ground :—by violence overthrown
 Of indignation ; and with shouts that drowned
 The crash it made in falling ! From the wreck
 A golden palace rose, or seemed to rise,
 The appointed seat of equitable law
 And mild paternal sway. The potent shock
 I felt : the transformation I perceived,
 As marvellously seized as in that moment
 When, from the blind mist issuing, I beheld
 Glory—beyond all glory ever seen, 720
 Confusion infinite of heaven and earth,
 Dazzling the soul. Meanwhile, prophetic harps
 In every grove were ringing, “ War shall cease ;
 Did ye not hear that conquest is abjured ?
 Bring garlands, bring forth choicest flowers, to deck
 The tree of Liberty.”—My heart rebounded ;
 My melancholy voice the chorus joined ;
 —“ Be joyful all ye nations ; in all lands,
 Ye that are capable of joy be glad !
 Henceforth, whate’er is wanting to yourselves 730
 In others ye shall promptly find ;—and all,
 Enriched by mutual and reflected wealth,
 Shall with one heart honour their common kind.”

‘ Thus was I reconverted to the world ;
 Society became my glittering bride,
 And airy hopes my children.—From the depths
 Of natural passion seemingly escaped,
 My soul diffused herself in wide embrace
 Of institutions, and the forms of things ;
 As they exist, in mutable array, 740

Upon life's surface. What, though in my veins
 There flowed no Gallic blood, nor had I breathed
 The air of France, not less than Gallic zeal
 Kindled and burnt among the sapless twigs
 Of my exhausted heart. If busy men
 In sober conclave met, to weave a web
 Of amity, whose living threads should stretch
 Beyond the seas, and to the farthest pole,
 There did I sit, assisting. If, with noise
 And acclamation, crowds in open air 750
 Expressed the tumult of their minds, my voice
 There mingled, heard or not. The powers of song
 I left not uninvoked; and, in still groves,
 Where mild enthusiasts turned a pensive lay
 Of thanks and expectation, in accord
 With their belief, I sang Saturnian rule
 Returned,—a progeny of golden years
 Permitted to descend, and bless mankind.
 —With promises the Hebrew Scriptures teem :
 I felt their invitation; and resumed 760
 A long-suspended office in the House
 Of public worship, where, the glowing phrase
 Of ancient inspiration serving me,
 I promised also,—with undaunted trust
 Foretold, and added prayer to prophecy;
 The admiration winning of the crowd;
 The help desiring of the pure devout.

'Scorn and contempt forbid me to proceed!
 But History, time's slavish scribe, will tell
 How rapidly the zealots of the cause 770
 Disbanded—or in hostile ranks appeared;
 Some, tired of honest service; these, outdone,
 Disgusted therefore, or appalled, by aims
 Of fiercer zealots—so confusion reigned,
 And the more faithful were compelled to exclaim,
 As Brutus did to Virtue, "Liberty,
 I worshipped thee, and find thee but a Shade!"

'Such recantation had for me no charm,
 Nor would I bend to it; who should have grieved
 At aught, however fair, that bore the mien 780
 Of a conclusion, or catastrophe.
 Why then conceal, that, when the simply good
 In timid selfishness withdrew, I sought
 Other support, not scrupulous whence it came;
 And, by what compromise it stood, not nice?

Enough if notions seemed to be high-pitched,
 And qualities determined.—Among men
 So charactered did I maintain a strife
 Hopeless, and still more hopeless every hour ;
 But, in the process, I began to feel 790
 That, if the emancipation of the world
 Were missed, I should at least secure my own,
 And be in part compensated. For rights,
 Widely—inveterately usurped upon,
 I spake with vehemence ; and promptly seized
 All that Abstraction furnished for my needs
 Or purposes ; nor scrupled to proclaim,
 And propagate, by liberty of life,
 Those new persuasions. Not that I rejoiced,
 Or even found pleasure, in such vagrant course, 800
 For its own sake ; but farthest from the walk
 Which I had trod in happiness and peace,
 Was most inviting to a troubled mind ;
 That, in a struggling and distempered world,
 Saw a seductive image of herself.
 Yet, mark the contradictions of which Man
 Is still the sport ! Here Nature was my guide,
 The Nature of the dissolute ; but thee,
 O fostering Nature ! I rejected—smiled
 At others' tears in pity ; and in scorn 810
 At those, which thy soft influence sometimes drew
 From my unguarded heart.—The tranquil shores
 Of Britain circumscribed me ; else, perhaps
 I might have been entangled among deeds,
 Which, now, as infamous, I should abhor—
 Despise, as senseless : for my spirit relished
 Strangely the exasperation of that Land,
 Which turned an angry beak against the down
 Of her own breast ; confounded into hope
 Of disencumbering thus her fretful wings. 820

' But all was quieted by iron bonds
 Of military sway. The shifting aims,
 The moral interests, the creative might,
 The varied functions and high attributes
 Of civil action, yielded to a power
 Formal, and odious, and contemptible.
 —In Britain, ruled a panic dread of change ;
 The weak were praised, rewarded, and advanced ;
 And, from the impulse of a just disdain,
 Once more did I retire into myself. 830
 There feeling no contentment, I resolved

To fly, for safeguard, to some foreign shore,
Remote from Europe ; from her blasted hopes ;
Her fields of carnage, and polluted air.

‘ Fresh blew the wind, when o’er the Atlantic Main
The ship went gliding with her thoughtless crew ;
And who among them but an Exile ?—freed
From discontent, indifferent, pleased to sit
Among the busily-employed, not more
With obligation charged, with service taxed, 840
Than the loose pendant—to the idle wind
Upon the tall mast streaming. But, ye Powers
Of soul and sense mysteriously allied,
O, never let the Wretched, if a choice
Be left him, trust the freight of his distress
To a long voyage on the silent deep !
For, like a plague, will memory break out ;
And, in the blank and solitude of things,
Upon his spirit, with a fever’s strength,
Will conscience prey.—Feebly must they have felt 850
Who, in old time, attired with snakes and whips
The vengeful Furies. *Beautiful* regards
Were turned on me—the face of her I loved ;
The Wife and Mother pitifully fixing
Tender reproaches, insupportable !
Where now that boasted liberty ? No welcome
From unknown objects I received ; and those,
Known and familiar, which the vaulted sky
Did, in the placid clearness of the night,
Disclose, had accusations to prefer 860
Against my peace. Within the cabin stood
That volume—as a compass for the soul—
Revered among the nations. I implored
Its guidance ; but the infallible support
Of faith was wanting. Tell me, why refused
To One by storms annoyed and adverse winds ;
Perplexed with currents ; of his weakness sick ;
Of vain endeavours tired ; and by his own,
And by his nature’s, ignorance, dismayed !

‘ Long-wished-for sight, the Western World appeared ;
And, when the ship was moored, I leaped ashore 871
Indignantly—resolved to be a man,
Who, having o’er the past no power, would live
No longer in subjection to the past,
With abject mind—from a tyrannic lord
Inviting penance, fruitlessly endured :

So, like a fugitive, whose feet have cleared
 Some boundary, which his followers may not cross
 In prosecution of their deadly chase,
 Respiring I looked round.—How bright the sun, 880
 The breeze how soft! Can any thing produced
 In the old World compare, thought I, for power
 And majesty with this gigantic stream,
 Sprung from the desert? And behold a city
 Fresh, youthful, and aspiring! What are these
 To me, or I to them? As much at least
 As he desires that they should be, whom winds
 And waves have wafted to this distant shore,
 In the condition of a damaged seed,
 Whose fibres cannot, if they would, take root. 890
 Here may I roam at large;—my business is,
 Roaming at large, to observe, and not to feel
 And, therefore, not to act—convinced that all
 Which bears the name of action, howsoever
 Beginning, ends in servitude—still painful,
 And mostly profitless. And, sooth to say,
 On nearer view, a motley spectacle
 Appeared, of high pretensions—unreproved
 But by the obstreperous voice of higher still;
 Big passions strutting on a petty stage; 900
 Which a detached spectator may regard
 Not unamused.—But ridicule demands
 Quick change of objects; and, to laugh alone,
 At a composing distance from the haunts
 Of strife and folly, though it be a treat
 As choice as musing Leisure can bestow;
 Yet, in the very centre of the crowd,
 To keep the secret of a poignant scorn,
 Howe'er to airy Demons suitable,
 Of all unsocial courses, is least fit 910
 For the gross spirit of mankind,—the one
 That soonest fails to please, and quickliest turns
 Into vexation.

Let us, then, I said,
 Leave this unknit Republic to the scourge
 Of her own passions; and to regions haste,
 Whose shades have never felt the encroaching axe,
 Or soil endured a transfer in the mart
 Of dire rapacity. There, Man abides,
 Primeval Nature's child. A creature weak
 In combination, (wherefore else driven back 920
 So far, and of his old inheritance
 So easily deprived?) but, for that cause,

More dignified, and stronger in himself;
 Whether to act, judge, suffer, or enjoy.
 True, the intelligence of social art
 Hath overpowered his forefathers, and soon
 Will sweep the remnant of his line away;
 But contemplations, worthier, nobler far
 Than her destructive energies, attend
 His independence, when along the side 930
 Of Mississippi, or that northern stream
 That spreads into successive seas, he walks;
 Pleased to perceive his own unshackled life,
 And his innate capacities of soul,
 There imaged: or when, having gained the top
 Of some commanding eminence, which yet
 Intruder ne'er beheld, he thence surveys
 Regions of wood and wide savannah, vast
 Expanse of unappropriated earth,
 With mind that sheds a light on what he sees; 940
 Free as the sun, and lonely as the sun,
 Pouring above his head its radiance down
 Upon a living and rejoicing world!

'So, westward, tow'rd the unviolated woods
 I bent my way; and, roaming far and wide,
 Failed not to greet the merry Mocking-bird;
 And, while the melancholy Muccawiss
 (The sportive bird's companion in the grove)
 Repeated o'er and o'er his plaintive cry,
 I sympathised at leisure with the sound; 950
 But that pure archetype of human greatness,
 I found him not. There, in his stead, appeared
 A creature, squalid, vengeful, and impure;
 Remorseless, and submissive to no law
 But superstitious fear, and abject sloth.

'Enough is told! Here am I—ye have heard
 What evidence I seek, and vainly seek;
 What from my fellow-beings I require,
 And either they have not to give, or I
 Lack virtue to receive; what I myself, 960
 Too oft by wilful forfeiture, have lost
 Nor can regain. How languidly I look
 Upon this visible fabric of the world,
 May be divined—perhaps it hath been said:—
 But spare your pity, if there be in me
 Aught that deserves respect: for I exist,
 Within myself, not comfortless.—The tenour

Which my life holds, he readily may conceive
 Whoe'er hath stood to watch a mountain brook
 In some still passage of its course, and seen, 970
 Within the depths of its capacious breast,
 Inverted trees, rocks, clouds, and azure sky;
 And, on its glassy surface, specks of foam,
 And conglobated bubbles undissolved,
 Numerous as stars; that, by their onward lapse,
 Betray to sight the motion of the stream,
 Else imperceptible. Meanwhile, is heard
 A softened roar, or murmur; and the sound
 Though soothing, and the little floating isles
 Though beautiful, are both by Nature charged 980
 With the same pensive office; and make known
 Through what perplexing labyrinths, abrupt
 Precipitations, and untoward straits,
 The earth-born wanderer hath passed; and quickly,
 That respite o'er, like traverses and toils
 Must he again encounter.—Such a stream
 Is human Life; and so the Spirit fares
 In the best quiet to her course allowed;
 And such is mine,—save only for a hope
 That my particular current soon will reach 990
 The unfathomable gulf, where all is still!

BOOK FOURTH

DESPONDENCY CORRECTED

ARGUMENT

STATE of feeling produced by the foregoing Narrative.—A belief in a superintending Providence the only adequate support under affliction.—Wanderer's ejaculation.—Acknowledges the difficulty of a lively faith.—Hence immoderate sorrow.—Exhortations.—How received.—Wanderer applies his discourse to that other cause of dejection in the Solitary's mind.—Disappointment from the French Revolution.—States grounds of hope, and insists on the necessity of patience and fortitude with respect to the course of great revolutions.—Knowledge the source of tranquillity.—Rural Solitude favourable to knowledge of the inferior Creatures; Study of their habits and ways recommended; exhortation to bodily exertion and communion with Nature.—Morbid Solitude pitiable.—Superstition better than apathy.—Apathy and destitution unknown in the infancy of society.—The various modes of Religion prevented it.—Illustrated in the Jewish, Persian, Babylonian, Chaldean, and Grecian modes of belief.—Solitary interposes.—Wanderer points out the influence of religious and imaginative feeling in the humble ranks of society, illustrated from present and past times.—These principles tend to recall exploded superstitions and Popery.—Wanderer rebuts this charge, and contrasts the dignities of the Imagination with the presumptuous littleness of certain modern Philosophers.—Recommends other lights and

guides.—Asserts the power of the Soul to regenerate herself; Solitary asks how.—Reply.—Personal appeal.—Exhortation to activity of body renewed.—How to commune with Nature.—Wanderer concludes with a legitimate union of the imagination, affections, understanding, and reason.—Effect of his discourse.—Evening; Return to the Cottage.

HERE closed the Tenant of that lonely vale
 His mournful narrative—commenced in pain,
 In pain commenced, and ended without peace:
 Yet tempered, not unfrequently, with strains
 Of native feeling, grateful to our minds;
 And yielding surely some relief to his,
 While we sate listening with compassion due.
 A pause of silence followed; then, with voice
 That did not falter though the heart was moved,
 The Wanderer said:—

‘ One adequate support 10
 For the calamities of mortal life
 Exists—one only; an assured belief
 That the procession of our fate, howe’er
 Sad or disturbed, is ordered by a Being
 Of infinite benevolence and power;
 Whose everlasting purposes embrace
 All accidents, converting them to good.
 —The darts of anguish *fix* not where the seat
 Of suffering hath been thoroughly fortified
 By acquiescence in the Will supreme 20
 For time and for eternity; by faith,
 Faith absolute in God, including hope,
 And the defence that lies in boundless love
 Of his perfections; with habitual dread
 Of aught unworthily conceived, endured
 Impatiently, ill-done, or left undone,
 To the dishonour of his holy name.
 Soul of our Souls, and safeguard of the world!
 Sustain, thou only canst, the sick of heart;
 Restore their languid spirits, and recall 30
 Their lost affections unto thee and thine!’

Then, as we issued from that covert nook,
 He thus continued, lifting up his eyes
 To heaven:—‘ How beautiful this dome of sky;
 And the vast hills, in fluctuation fixed
 At thy command, how awful! Shall the Soul,
 Human and rational, report of thee
 Even less than these!—Be mute who will, who can,
 Yet I will praise thee with impassioned voice:
 My lips, that may forget thee in the crowd, 40

Cannot forget thee here ; where thou hast built,
 For thy own glory, in the wilderness !
 Me didst thou constitute a priest of thine,
 In such a temple as we now behold
 Reared for thy presence : therefore am I bound
 To worship, here, and everywhere—as one
 Not doomed to ignorance, though forced to tread,
 From childhood up, the ways of poverty ;
 From unreflecting ignorance preserved,
 And from debasement rescued.—By thy grace 50
 The particle divine remained unquenched ;
 And, 'mid the wild weeds of a rugged soil,
 Thy bounty caused to flourish deathless flowers,
 From paradise transplanted : wintry age
 Impends ; the frost will gather round my heart ;
 If the flowers wither, I am worse than dead !
 —Come, labour, when the worn-out frame requires
 Perpetual sabbath ; come, disease and want ;
 And sad exclusion through decay of sense ;
 But leave me unabated trust in thee— 60
 And let thy favour, to the end of life,
 Inspire me with ability to seek
 Repose and hope among eternal things—
 Father of heaven and earth ! and I am rich,
 And will possess my portion in content !

' And what are things eternal ?—powers depart,'
 The grey-haired Wanderer steadfastly replied,
 Answering the question which himself had asked,
 ' Possessions vanish, and opinions change,
 And passions hold a fluctuating seat : 70
 But, by the storms of circumstance unshaken,
 And subject neither to eclipse nor wane,
 Duty exists ;—immutably survive,
 For our support, the measures and the forms,
 Which an abstract intelligence supplies ;
 Whose kingdom is, where time and space are not.
 Of other converse which mind, soul, and heart,
 Do, with united urgency, require,
 What more that may not perish ?—Thou, dread source,
 Prime, self-existing cause and end of all 80
 That in the scale of being fill their place ;
 Above our human region, or below,
 Set and sustained ;—thou, who didst wrap the cloud
 Of infancy around us, that thyself,
 Therein, with our simplicity awhile
 Might'st hold, on earth, communion undisturbed ;

Who from the anarchy of dreaming sleep,
 Or from its death-like void, with punctual care,
 And touch as gentle as the morning light,
 Restor'st us, daily, to the powers of sense 90
 And reason's steadfast rule—thou, thou alone
 Art everlasting, and the blessed Spirits,
 Which thou includest, as the sea her waves :
 For adoration thou endur'st ; endure
 For consciousness the motions of thy will ;
 For apprehension those transcendent truths
 Of the pure intellect, that stand as laws
 (Submission constituting strength and power)
 Even to thy Being's infinite majesty !
 This universe shall pass away—a work 100
 Glorious ! because the shadow of thy might,
 A step, or link, for intercourse with thee.
 Ah ! if the time must come, in which my feet
 No more shall stray where meditation leads,
 By flowing stream, through wood, or craggy wild,
 Loved haunts like these ; the unimprisoned Mind
 May yet have scope to range among her own,
 Her thoughts, her images, her high desires.
 If the dear faculty of sight should fail,
 Still, it may be allowed me to remember 110
 What visionary powers of eye and soul
 In youth were mine ; when, stationed on the top
 Of some huge hill, expectant, I beheld
 The sun rise up, from distant climes returned
 Darkness to chase, and sleep ; and bring the day,
 His bounteous gift ! or saw him toward the deep
 Sink, with a retinue of flaming clouds
 Attended ; then, my spirit was entranced
 With joy exalted to beatitude ;
 The measure of my soul was filled with bliss, 120
 And holiest love ; as earth, sea, air, with light,
 With pomp, with glory, with magnificence !

'Those fervent raptures are for ever flown ;
 And, since their date, my soul hath undergone
 Change manifold, for better or for worse :
 Yet cease I not to struggle, and aspire
 Heavenward ; and chide the part of me that flags,
 Through sinful choice ; or dread necessity
 On human nature from above imposed.
 'Tis, by comparison, an easy task 130
 Earth to despise ; but, to converse with heaven—
 This is not easy :—to relinquish all

We have, or hope, of happiness and joy,
 And stand in freedom loosened from this world,
 I deem not arduous; but must needs confess
 That 'tis a thing impossible to frame
 Conceptions equal to the soul's desires;
 And the most difficult of tasks to *keep*
 Heights which the soul is competent to gain.

—Man is of dust: ethereal hopes are his,
 Which, when they should sustain themselves aloft,
 Want due consistence; like a pillar of smoke,
 That with majestic energy from earth
 Rises; but, having reached the thinner air,
 Melts, and dissolves, and is no longer seen.
 From this infirmity of mortal kind

140

Sorrow proceeds, which else were not; at least,
 If grief be something hallowed and ordained,
 If, in proportion, it be just and meet,
 Yet, through this weakness of the general heart,
 Is it enabled to maintain its hold

150

In that excess which conscience disapproves.
 For who could sink and settle to that point
 Of selfishness; so senseless who could be
 As long and perseveringly to mourn
 For any object of his love, removed
 From this unstable world, if he could fix

A satisfying view upon that state
 Of pure, imperishable, blessedness,
 Which reason promises, and holy writ
 Ensures to all believers?—Yet mistrust

160

Is of such incapacity, methinks,
 No natural branch; despondency far less;
 And, least of all, is absolute despair.

—And, if there be whose tender frames have drooped
 Even to the dust; apparently, through weight
 Of anguish unrelieved, and lack of power
 An agonizing sorrow to transmute;

Deem not that proof is here of hope withheld
 When wanted most; a confidence impaired
 So pitiaibly, that, having ceased to see
 With bodily eyes, they are borne down by love
 Of what is lost, and perish through regret.

170

Oh! no, the innocent Sufferer often sees
 Too clearly; feels too vividly; and longs
 To realize the vision, with intense
 And over-constant yearning;—there—there lies
 The excess, by which the balance is destroyed.
 Too, too contracted are these walls of flesh,

This vital warmth too cold, these visual orbs,
Though inconceivably endowed, too dim
For any passion of the soul that leads
To ecstasy ; and, all the crooked paths
Of time and change disdaining, takes its course
Along the line of limitless desires.

I, speaking now from such disorder free,
Nor rapt, nor craving, but in settled peace,
I cannot doubt that they whom you deplore
Are glorified ; or, if they sleep, shall wake
From sleep, and dwell with God in endless love.
Hope, below this, consists not with belief
In mercy, carried infinite degrees
Beyond the tenderness of human hearts :
Hope, below this, consists not with belief
In perfect wisdom, guiding mightiest power,
That finds no limits but her own pure will.

‘ Here then we rest ; not fearing for our creed
The worst that human reasoning can achieve,
To unsettle or perplex it : yet with pain
Acknowledging, and grievous self-reproach,
That, though immovably convinced, we want
Zeal, and the virtue to exist by faith
As soldiers live by courage ; as, by strength
Of heart, the sailor fights with roaring seas.
Alas ! the endowment of immortal power
Is matched unequally with custom, time,
And domineering faculties of sense
In *all* ; in most with superadded foes,
Idle temptations ; open vanities,
Ephemeral offspring of the unblushing world ;
And, in the private regions of the mind,
Ill-governed passions, ranklings of despite,
Immoderate wishes, pining discontent,
Distress and care. What then remains ?—To seek
Those helps for his occasions ever near
Who lacks not will to use them ; vows, renewed
On the first motion of a holy thought ;
Vigils of contemplation ; praise ; and prayer—
A stream, which, from the fountain of the heart
Issuing, however feebly, nowhere flows
Without access of unexpected strength.
But, above all, the victory is most sure
For him, who, seeking faith by virtue, strives
To yield entire submission to the law
Of conscience—conscience revered and obeyed,

As God's most intimate presence in the soul,
 And his most perfect image in the world.
 —Endeavour thus to live ; these rules regard ;
 These helps solicit ; and a steadfast seat
 Shall then be yours among the happy few 230
 Who dwell on earth, yet breathe empyreal air,
 Sons of the morning. For your nobler part,
 Ere disencumbered of her mortal chains,
 Doubt shall be quelled and trouble chased away ;
 With only such degree of sadness left
 As may support longings of pure desire ;
 And strengthen love, rejoicing secretly
 In the sublime attractions of the grave.'

While, in this strain, the venerable Sage
 Poured forth his aspirations, and announced 240
 His judgments, near that lonely house we paced
 A plot of green-sward, seemingly preserved
 By nature's care from wreck of scattered stones,
 And from encroachment of encircling heath :
 Small space ! but, for reiterated steps,
 Smooth and commodious ; as a stately deck
 Which to and fro the mariner is used
 To tread for pastime, talking with his mates,
 Or haply thinking of far-distant friends,
 While the ship glides before a steady breeze. 250
 Stillness prevailed around us : and the voice
 That spake was capable to lift the soul
 Toward regions yet more tranquil. But, methought,
 That he, whose fixed despondency had given
 Impulse and motive to that strong discourse,
 Was less upraised in spirit than abashed ;
 Shrinking from admonition, like a man
 Who feels that to exhort is to reproach.
 Yet not to be diverted from his aim,
 The Sage continued :—

' For that other loss, 260
 The loss of confidence in social man,
 By the unexpected transports of our age
 Carried so high, that every thought, which looked
 Beyond the temporal destiny of the Kind,
 To many seemed superfluous—as, no cause
 Could e'er for such exalted confidence
 Exist ; so, none is now for fixed despair :
 The two extremes are equally disowned
 By reason : if, with sharp recoil, from one
 You have been driven far as its opposite, 270

Between them seek the point whereon to build
Sound expectations. So doth he advise
Who shared at first the illusion ; but was soon
Cast from the pedestal of pride by shocks
Which Nature gently gave, in woods and fields ;
Nor unproved by Providence, thus speaking
To the inattentive children of the world :
“ Vain-glorious Generation ! what new powers
On you have been conferred ? what gifts, withheld
From your progenitors, have ye received, 280
Fit recompense of new desert ? what claim
Are ye prepared to urge, that my decrees
For you should undergo a sudden change ;
And the weak functions of one busy day,
Reclaiming and extirpating, perform
What all the slowly-moving years of time,
With their united force, have left undone ?
By nature's gradual processes be taught ;
By story be confounded ! - Ye aspire
Rashly, to fall once more ; and that false fruit, 290
Which, to your overweening spirits, yields
Hope of a flight celestial, will produce
Misery and shame. But Wisdom of her sons
Shall not the less, though late, be justified.”

‘ Such timely warning,’ said the Wanderer, ‘ gave
That visionary voice ; and, at this day,
When a Tartarean darkness overspreads
The groaning nations ; when the impious rule,
By will or by established ordinance,
Their own dire agents, and constrain the good 300
To acts which they abhor ; though I bewail
This triumph, yet the pity of my heart
Prevents me not from owning, that the law,
By which mankind now suffers, is most just.
For by superior energies ; more strict
Affiance in each other ; faith more firm
In their unhallowed principles ; the bad
Have fairly earned a victory o’er the weak,
The vacillating, inconsistent good.
Therefore, not unconsolated, I wait—in hope 310
To see the moment, when the righteous cause
Shall gain defenders zealous and devout
As they who have opposed her ; in which Virtue
Will, to her efforts, tolerate no bounds
That are not lofty as her rights ; aspiring
By impulse of her own ethereal zeal.

That spirit only can redeem mankind ;
 And when that sacred spirit shall appear,
 Then shall *our* triumph be complete as theirs.
 Yet, should this confidence prove vain, the wise 320
 Have still the keeping of their proper peace ;
 Are guardians of their own tranquillity.
 They act, or they recede, observe, and feel ;
 “ Knowing the heart of man is set to be
 The centre of this world, about the which
 Those revolutions of disturbances
 Still roll ; where all the aspects of misery
 Predominate ; whose strong effects are such
 As he must bear, being powerless to redress ;
And that unless above himself he can 330
*Erect himself, how poor a thing is Man ! ”*¹

‘ Happy is he who lives to understand,
 Not human nature only, but explores
 All natures,—to the end that he may find
 The law that governs each ; and where begins
 The union, the partition where, that makes
 Kind and degree, among all visible Beings ;
 The constitutions, powers, and faculties,
 Which they inherit,—cannot step beyond,— 340
 And cannot fall beneath ; that do assign
 To every class its station and its office,
 Through all the mighty commonwealth of things ;
 Up from the creeping plant to sovereign Man.
 Such converse, if directed by a meek,
 Sincere, and humble spirit, teaches love :
 For knowledge is delight ; and such delight
 Breeds love : yet, suited as it rather is
 To thought and to the climbing intellect,
 It teaches less to love, than to adore ;
 If that be not indeed the highest love ! ’ 350

‘ Yet,’ said I, tempted here to interpose,
 ‘ The dignity of life is not impaired
 By aught that innocently satisfies
 The humbler cravings of the heart ; and he
 Is still a happier man, who, for those heights
 Of speculation not unfit, descends ;
 And such benign affections cultivates
 Among the inferior kinds ; not merely those
 That he may call his own, and which depend,
 As individual objects of regard, 360
 Upon his care, from whom he also looks

¹ Daniel.

For signs and tokens of a mutual bond;
 But others, far beyond this narrow sphere,
 Whom, for the very sake of love, he loves.
 Nor is it a mean praise of rural life
 And solitude, that they do favour most,
 Most frequently call forth, and best sustain,
 These pure sensations; that can penetrate
 The obstreperous city; on the barren seas
 Are not unfelt; and much might recommend,
 How much they might inspirit and endear,
 The loneliness of this sublime retreat!'

370

'Yes,' said the Sage, resuming the discourse
 Again directed to his downcast Friend,
 'If, with the froward will and grovelling soul
 Of man, offended, liberty is here,
 And invitation every hour renewed,
 To mark *their* placid state, who never heard
 Of a command which they have power to break,
 Or rule which they are tempted to transgress:
 These with a soothed or elevated heart
 May we behold; their knowledge register;
 Observe their ways; and, free from envy, find
 Complacency there:—but wherefore this to you?
 I guess that, welcome to your lonely hearth,
 The redbreast, ruffled up by winter's cold
 Into a "feathery bunch," feeds at your hand:
 A box, perchance, is from your casement hung
 For the small wren to build in;—not in vain,
 The barriers disregarding that surround
 This deep abiding place, before your sight
 Mounts on the breeze the butterfly; and soars,
 Small creature as she is, from earth's bright flowers,
 Into the dewy clouds. 'Ambition reigns
 In the waste wilderness: the Soul ascends
 Drawn towards her native firmament of heaven,
 When the fresh eagle, in the month of May,
 Upborne, at evening, on replenished wing,
 This shaded valley leaves; and leaves the dark
 Empurpled hills, conspicuously renewing
 A proud communication with the sun
 Low sunk beneath the horizon!—List!—I heard,
 From yon huge breast of rock, a voice sent forth
 As if the visible mountain made the cry.
 Again!—The effect upon the soul was such
 As he expressed: from out the mountain's heart
 The solemn voice appeared to issue, startling

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The blank air—for the region all around
 Stood empty of all shape of life, and silent
 Save for that single cry, the unanswered bleat
 Of a poor lamb—left somewhere to itself,
 The plaintive spirit of the solitude !
 He paused, as if unwilling to proceed,
 Through consciousness that silence in such place
 Was best, the most affecting eloquence.
 But soon his thoughts returned upon themselves,
 And, in soft tone of speech, thus he resumed.

410

‘ Ah ! if the heart, too confidently raised,
 Perchance too lightly occupied, or lulled
 Too easily, despise or overlook
 The vassalage that binds her to the earth,
 Her sad dependence upon time, and all
 The trepidations of mortality,
 What place so destitute and void—but there
 The little flower her vanity shall check ;
 The trailing worm reprove her thoughtless pride ?

420

‘ These craggy regions, these chaotic wilds,
 Does that benignity pervade, that warms
 The mole contented with her darksome walk
 In the cold ground ; and to the emmet gives
 Her foresight, and intelligence that makes
 The tiny creatures strong by social league ;
 Supports the generations, multiplies
 Their tribes, till we behold a spacious plain
 Or grassy bottom, all, with little hills—
 Their labour, covered, as a lake with waves ;
 Thousands of cities, in the desert place
 Built up of life, and food, and means of life !
 Nor wanting here, to entertain the thought,
 Creatures that in communities exist,
 Less, as might seem, for general guardianship
 Or through dependence upon mutual aid,
 Than by participation of delight
 And a strict love of fellowship, combined.
 What other spirit can it be that prompts
 The gilded summer flies to mix and weave
 Their sports together in the solar beam,
 Or in the gloom of twilight hum their joy ?
 More obviously the self-same influence rules
 The feathered kinds ; the fieldfare’s pensive flock,
 The cawing rooks, and sea-mews from afar,
 Hovering above these inland solitudes,

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By the rough wind unscattered, at whose call
 Up through the trenches of the long-drawn vales
 Their voyage was begun : nor is its power
 Unfelt among the sedentary fowl
 That seek yon pool, and there prolong their stay
 In silent congress ; or together roused
 Take flight ; while with their clang the air resounds.
 And, over all, in that ethereal vault, 460
 Is the mute company of changeful clouds ;
 Bright apparition, suddenly put forth,
 The rainbow smiling on the faded storm ;
 The mild assemblage of the starry heavens ;
 And the great sun, earth's universal lord !

‘ How bountiful is Nature ! he shall find
 Who seeks not ; and to him, who hath not asked,
 Large measure shall be dealt. Three sabbath-days
 Are scarcely told, since, on a service bent
 Of mere humanity, you clomb those heights ; 470
 And what a marvellous and heavenly show
 Was suddenly revealed !—the swains moved on,
 And heeded not : you lingered, you perceived
 And felt, deeply as living man could feel.
 There is a luxury in self-dispraise ;
 And inward self-disparagement affords
 To meditative spleen a grateful feast.
 Trust me, pronouncing on your own desert,
 You judge unthankfully : distempered nerves
 Infect the thoughts ; the languor of the frame 480
 Depresses the soul's vigour. Quit your couch—
 Cleave not so fondly to your moody cell ;
 Nor let the hallowed powers, that shed from heaven
 Stillness and rest, with disapproving eye
 Look down upon your taper, through a watch
 Of midnight hours, unseasonably twinkling
 In this deep Hollow, like a sullen star
 Dimly reflected in a lonely pool.
 Take courage, and withdraw yourself from ways
 That run not parallel to nature's course. 490
 Rise with the lark ! your matins shall obtain
 Grace, be their composition what it may,
 If but with hers performed ; climb once again,
 Climb every day, those ramparts ; meet the breeze
 Upon their tops, adventurous as a bee
 That from your garden thither soars, to feed
 On new-blown heath ; let yon commanding rock
 Be your frequented watch-tower ; roll the stone

In thunder down the mountains ; with all your might
 Chase the wild goat ; and if the bold red deer 500
 Fly to those harbours, driven by hound and horn
 Loud echoing, add your speed to the pursuit ;
 So, wearied to your hut shall you return,
 And sink at evening into sound repose.'

The Solitary lifted toward the hills
 A kindling eye :—accordant feelings rushed
 Into my bosom, whence these words broke forth :
 'Oh ! what a joy it were, in vigorous health,
 To have a body (this our vital frame
 With shrinking sensibility endued, 510
 And all the nice regards of flesh and blood)
 And to the elements surrender it
 As if it were a spirit !—How divine,
 The liberty, for frail, for mortal, man
 To roam at large among unpeopled glens
 And mountainous retirements, only trod
 By devious footsteps ; regions consecrate
 To oldest time ! and, reckless of the storm
 That keeps the raven quiet in her nest,
 Be as a presence or a motion—one 520
 Among the many there ; and while the mists
 Flying, and rainy vapours, call out shapes
 And phantoms from the crags and solid earth
 As fast as a musician scatters sounds
 Out of an instrument ; and while the streams
 (As at a first creation and in haste
 To exercise their untried faculties)
 Descending from the region of the clouds,
 And starting from the hollows of the earth
 More multitudinous every moment, rend 530
 Their way before them—what a joy to roam
 An equal among mightiest energies ;
 And haply sometimes with articulate voice,
 Amid the deafening tumult, scarcely heard
 By him that utters it, exclaim aloud,
 "Rage on, ye elements ! let moon and stars
 Their aspects lend, and mingle in their turn
 With this commotion (ruinous though it be)
 From day to night, from night to day, prolonged !"'

'Yes,' said the Wanderer, taking from my lips 540
 The strain of transport, 'whosoe'er in youth
 Has, through ambition of his soul, given way
 To such desires, and grasped at such delight,

Shall feel congenial stirrings late and long,
 In spite of all the weakness that life brings,
 Its cares and sorrows ; he, though taught to own
 The tranquillizing power of time, shall wake,
 Wake sometimes to a noble restlessness—
 Loving the sports which once he gloried in.

‘ Compatriot, Friend, remote are Garry’s hills, 550
 The streams far distant of your native glen ;
 Yet is their form and image here expressed
 With brotherly resemblance. Turn your steps
 Wherever fancy leads ; by day, by night,
 Are various engines working, not the same
 As those with which your soul in youth was moved,
 But by the great Artificer endowed
 With no inferior power. You dwell alone ;
 You walk, you live, you speculate alone ;
 Yet doth remembrance, like a sovereign prince, 560
 For you a stately gallery maintain
 Of gay or tragic pictures. You have seen,
 Have acted, suffered, travelled far, observed
 With no incurious eye ; and books are yours,
 Within whose silent chambers treasure lies
 Preserved from age to age ; more precious far
 Than that accumulated store of gold
 And orient gems, which, for a day of need,
 The Sultan hides deep in ancestral tombs.
 These hoards of truth you can unlock at will : 570
 And music waits upon your skilful touch,
 Sounds which the wandering shepherd from these
 heights
 Hears, and forgets his purpose ;—furnished thus,
 How can you droop, if willing to be upraised ?

‘ A piteous lot it were to flee from Man—
 Yet not rejoice in Nature. He, whose hours
 Are by domestic pleasures uncaressed
 And unenlivened ; who exists whole years
 Apart from benefits received or done
 ‘ Mid the transactions of the bustling crowd ; 580
 Who neither hears, nor feels a wish to hear,
 Of the world’s interests—such a one hath need
 Of a quick fancy and an active heart,
 That, for the day’s consumption, books may yield
 Food not unwholesome ; earth and air correct
 His morbid humour, with delight supplied
 Or solace, varying as the seasons change.

—Truth has her pleasure-grounds, her haunts of ease
 And easy contemplation ; gay parterres,
 And labyrinthine walks, her sunny glades 590
 And shady groves in studied contrast—each,
 For recreation, leading into each :
 These may he range, if willing to partake
 Their soft indulgences, and in due time
 May issue thence, recruited for the tasks
 And course of service Truth requires from those
 Who tend her altars, wait upon her throne,
 And guard her fortresses. Who thinks, and feels,
 And recognises ever and anon
 The breeze of nature stirring in his soul, 600
 Why need such man go desperately astray,
 And nurse “ the dreadful appetite of death ” ?
 If tired with systems, each in its degree
 Substantial, and all crumbling in their turn,
 Let him build systems of his own, and smile
 At the fond work, demolished with a touch ;
 If unreligious, let him be at once,
 Among ten thousand innocents, enrolled
 A pupil in the many-chambered school,
 Where superstition weaves her airy dreams. 610

‘ Life’s autumn past, I stand on winter’s verge ;
 And daily lose what I desire to keep :
 Yet rather would I instantly decline
 To the traditionary sympathies
 Of a most rustic ignorance, and take
 A fearful apprehension from the owl
 Or death-watch : and as readily rejoice,
 If two auspicious magpies crossed my way ;—
 To this would rather bend than see and hear
 The repetitions wearisome of sense, 620
 Where soul is dead, and feeling hath no place ;
 Where knowledge, ill begun in cold remark
 On outward things, with formal inference ends ;
 Or, if the mind turn inward, she recoils
 At once—or, not recoiling, is perplexed—
 Lost in a gloom of uninspired research ;
 Meanwhile, the heart within the heart, the seat
 Where peace and happy consciousness should dwell,
 On its own axis restlessly revolving,
 Seeks, yet can nowhere find, the light of truth. 630

‘ Upon the breast of new-created earth
 Man walked ; and when and wheresoe’er he moved,

Alone or mated, solitude was not.
 He heard, borne on the wind, the articulate voice
 Of God ; and Angels to his sight appeared
 Crowning the glorious hills of paradise ;
 Or through the groves gliding like morning mist
 Enkindled by the sun. He sate—and talked
 With wingèd Messengers ; who daily brought
 To his small island in the ethereal deep 640
 Tidings of joy and love.—From those pure heights
 (Whether of actual vision, sensible
 To sight and feeling, or that in this sort
 Have condescendingly been shadowed forth
 Communications spiritually maintained,
 And intuitions moral and divine)
 Fell Human-kind—to banishment condemned
 That flowing years repealed not : and distress
 And grief spread wide ; but Man escaped the doom
 Of destitution ;—solitude was not. 650
 —Jehovah—shapeless Power above all Powers,
 Single and one, the omnipresent God,
 By vocal utterance, or blaze of light,
 Or cloud of darkness, localised in heaven ;
 On earth, enshrined within the wandering ark ;
 Or, out of Sion, thundering from his throne
 Between the Cherubim—on the chosen Race
 Showered miracles, and ceased not to dispense
 Judgments, that filled the land from age to age
 With hope, and love, and gratitude, and fear ; 660
 And with amazement smote ;—thereby to assert
 His scorned, or unacknowledged, sovereignty.
 And when the One, ineffable of name,
 Of nature indivisible, withdrew
 From mortal adoration or regard,
 Not then was Deity engulfed ; nor Man,
 The rational creature, left, to feel the weight
 Of his own reason, without sense or thought
 Of higher reason and a purer will,
 To benefit and bless, through mightier power :— 670
 Whether the Persian—zealous to reject
 Altar and image, and the inclusive walls
 And roofs of temples built by human hands—
 To loftiest heights ascending, from their tops,
 With myrtle-wreathed tiara on his brow,
 Presented sacrifice to moon and stars,
 And to the winds and mother elements,
 And the whole circle of the heavens, for him
 A sensitive existence, and a God,

With lifted hands invoked, and songs of praise : 680
 Or, less reluctantly to bonds of sense
 Yielding his soul, the Babylonian framed
 For influence undefined a personal shape ;
 And, from the plain, with toil immense, upreared
 Tower eight times planted on the top of tower,
 That Belus, nightly to his splendid couch
 Descending, there might rest ; upon that height
 Pure and serene, diffused—to overlook
 Winding Euphrates, and the city vast
 Of his devoted worshippers, far-stretched, 690
 With grove and field and garden interspersed ;
 Their town, and foodful region for support
 Against the pressure of beleaguering war.

‘Chaldean Shepherds, ranging trackless fields,
 Beneath the concave of unclouded skies
 Spread like a sea, in boundless solitude,
 Looked on the polar star, as on a guide
 And guardian of their course, that never closed
 His steadfast eye. The planetary Five
 With a submissive reverence they beheld ; 700
 Watched, from the centre of their sleeping flocks,
 Those radiant Mercuries, that seemed to move
 Carrying through ether, in perpetual round,
 Decrees and resolutions of the Gods ;
 And, by their aspects, signifying works
 Of dim futurity, to Man revealed.
 —The imaginative faculty was lord
 Of observations natural ; and, thus
 Led on, those shepherds made report of stars
 In set rotation passing to and fro, 710
 Between the orbs of our apparent sphere
 And its invisible counterpart, adorned
 With answering constellations, under earth,
 Removed from all approach of living sight
 But present to the dead ; who, so they deemed,
 Like those celestial messengers beheld
 All accidents, and judges were of all.

‘The lively Grecian, in a land of hills,
 Rivers and fertile plains, and sounding shores,—
 Under a cope of sky more variable, 720
 Could find commodious place for every God,
 Promptly received, as prodigally brought,
 From the surrounding countries, at the choice
 Of all adventurers. With unrivalled skill,

As nicest observation furnished hints
 For studious fancy, his quick hand bestowed
 On fluent operations a fixed shape ;
 Metal or stone, idolatrously served.
 And yet—triumphant o'er this pompous show
 Of art, this palpable array of sense, 730
 On every side encountered ; in despite
 Of the gross fictions chanted in the streets
 By wandering Rhapsodists ; and in contempt
 Of doubt and bold denial hourly urged
 Amid the wrangling schools—a SPIRIT hung,
 Beautiful region ! o'er thy towns and farms,
 Statues and temples, and memorial tombs ;
 And emanations were perceived ; and acts
 Of immortality, in Nature's course,
 Exemplified by mysteries, that were felt 740
 As bonds, on grave philosopher imposed
 And armed warrior ; and in every grove
 A gay or pensive tenderness prevailed,
 When piety more awful had relaxed.
 —“ Take, running river, take these locks of mine ”—
 Thus would the Votary say—“ this severed hair,
 My vow fulfilling, do I here present,
 Thankful for my beloved child's return.
 Thy banks, Cephisus, he again hath trod,
 Thy murmurs heard ; and drunk the crystal lymph 750
 With which thou dost refresh the thirsty lip,
 And, all day long, moisten these flowery fields ! ”
 And, doubtless, sometimes, when the hair was shed
 Upon the flowing stream, a thought arose
 Of Life continuous, Being unimpaired ;
 That hath been, is, and where it was and is
 There shall endure,—existence unexposed
 To the blind walk of mortal accident ;
 From diminution safe and weakening age ;
 While man grows old, and dwindles, and decays ; 760
 And countless generations of mankind
 Depart ; and leave no vestige where they trod.

‘ We live by Admiration, Hope, and Love ;
 And, even as these are well and wisely fixed,
 In dignity of being we ascend.
 But what is error ? ’—‘ Answer he who can ! ’
 The Sceptic somewhat haughtily exclaimed :
 ‘ Love, Hope, and Admiration—are they not
 Mad Fancy's favourite vassals ? Does not life
 Use them, full oft, as pioneers to ruin, 770

Guides to destruction? Is it well to trust
 Imagination's light when reason's fails,
 The unguarded taper where the guarded faints?
 —Stoop from those heights, and soberly declare
 What error is; and, of our errors, which
 Doth most debase the mind; the genuine seats
 Of power, where are they? Who shall regulate,
 With truth, the scale of intellectual rank?

‘Methinks,’ persuasively the Sage replied,
 ‘That for this arduous office you possess 780
 Some rare advantages. Your early days
 A grateful recollection must supply
 Of much exalted good by Heaven vouchsafed
 To dignify the humblest state.—Your voice
 Hath, in my hearing, often testified
 That poor men's children, they, and they alone,
 By their condition taught, can understand
 The wisdom of the prayer that daily asks
 For daily bread. A consciousness is yours 790
 How feelingly religion may be learned
 In smoky cabins, from a mother's tongue—
 Heard while the dwelling vibrates to the din
 Of the contiguous torrent, gathering strength
 At every moment—and, with strength, increase
 Of fury; or, while snow is at the door,
 Assaulting and defending, and the wind,
 A sightless labourer, whistles at his work—
 Fearful; but resignation tempers fear,
 And piety is sweet to infant minds.
 —The Shepherd-lad, that in the sunshine carves, 800
 On the green turf, a dial—to divide
 The silent hours; and who to that report
 Can portion out his pleasures, and adapt,
 Throughout a long and lonely summer's day
 His round of pastoral duties, is not left
 With less intelligence for *moral* things
 Of gravest import. Early he perceives,
 Within himself, a measure and a rule,
 Which to the sun of truth he can apply,
 That shines for him, and shines for all mankind. 810
 Experience daily fixing his regards
 On nature's wants, he knows how few they are,
 And where they lie, how answered and appeased.
 This knowledge ample recompense affords
 For manifold privations; he refers
 His notions to this standard; on this rock

Rests his desires ; and hence, in after life,
 Soul-strengthening patience, and sublime content.
 Imagination—not permitted here
 To waste her powers, as in the worldling's mind, 820
 On fickle pleasures, and superfluous cares,
 And trivial ostentation—is left free
 And puissant to range the solemn walks
 Of time and nature, girded by a zone
 That, while it binds, invigorates and supports.
 Acknowledge, then, that whether by the side
 Of his poor hut, or on the mountain-top,
 Or in the cultured field, a Man so bred
 (Take from him what you will upon the score
 Of ignorance or illusion) lives and breathes 830
 For noble purposes of mind : his heart
 Beats to the heroic song of ancient days ;
 His eye distinguishes, his soul creates.
 And those illusions, which excite the scorn
 Or move the pity of unthinking minds,
 Are they not mainly outward ministers
 Of inward conscience ? with whose service charged
 They came and go, appeared and disappear,
 Diverting evil purposes, remorse
 Awakening, chastening an intemperate grief, 840
 Or pride of heart abating : and, whene'er
 For less important ends those phantoms move,
 Who would forbid them, if their presence serve,
 On thinly-peopled mountains and wild heaths,
 Filling a space, else vacant, to exalt
 The forms of Nature, and enlarge her powers ?

‘ Once more to distant ages of the world
 Let us revert, and place before our thoughts
 The face which rural solitude might wear
 To the unenlightened swains of pagan Greece. 850
 —In that fair clime, the lonely herdsman, stretched
 On the soft grass through half a summer's day,
 With music lulled his indolent repose :
 And, in some fit of weariness, if he,
 When his own breath was silent, chanced to hear
 A distant strain, far sweeter than the sounds
 Which his poor skill could make, his fancy fetched,
 Even from the blazing chariot of the sun,
 A beardless Youth, who touched a golden lute,
 And filled the illumined groves with ravishment. 860
 The nightly hunter, lifting a bright eye
 Up towards the crescent moon, with grateful heart

Called on the lovely wanderer who bestowed
 That timely light, to share his joyous sport :
 And hence, a beaming Goddess with her Nymphs,
 Across the lawn and through the darksome grove,
 Not unaccompanied with tuneful notes
 By echo multiplied from rock or cave,
 Swept in the storm of chase ; as moon and stars
 Glance rapidly along the clouded heaven, 870
 When winds are blowing strong. The traveller slaked
 His thirst from rill or gushing fount, and thanked
 The Naiad. Sunbeams, upon distant hills
 Gliding apace, with shadows in their train,
 Might, with small help from fancy, be transformed
 Into fleet Oreads sporting visibly.
 The Zephyrs fanning, as they passed, their wings,
 Lacked not, for love, fair objects whom they wooed
 With gentle whisper. Withered boughs grotesque,
 Stripped of their leaves and twigs by hoary age, 880
 From depth of shaggy covert peeping forth
 In the low vale, or on steep mountain-side ;
 And, sometimes, intermixed with stirring horns
 Of the live deer, or goat's depending beard,—
 These were the lurking Satyrs, a wild brood
 Of gamesome Deities ; or Pan himself,
 The simple shepherd's awe-inspiring God !'

The strain was aptly chosen ; and I could mark
 Its kindly influence, o'er the yielding brow
 Of our Companion, gradually diffused ; 890
 While, listening, he had paced the noiseless turf,
 Like one whose untired ear a murmuring stream
 Detains ; but tempted now to interpose,
 He with a smile exclaimed :—

'Tis well you speak
 At a safe distance from our native land,
 And from the mansions where our youth was taught.
 The true descendants of those godly men
 Who swept from Scotland, in a flame of zeal,
 Shrine, altar, image, and the massy piles
 That harboured them,—the souls retaining yet 900
 The churlish features of that after-race
 Who fled to woods, caverns, and jutting rocks,
 In deadly scorn of superstitious rites,
 Or what their scruples construed to be such—
 How, think you, would they tolerate this scheme
 Of fine propensities, that tends, if urged
 Far as it might be urged, to sow afresh

The weeds of Romish phantasy, in vain
 Uprooted ; would re-consecrate our wells
 To good Saint Fillan and to fair Saint Anne ; 910
 And from long banishment recall Saint Giles,
 To watch again with tutelary love
 O'er stately Edinborough throned on crags ?
 A blessed restoration, to behold
 The patron, on the shoulders of his priests,
 Once more parading through her crowded streets
 Now simply guarded by the sober powers
 Of science, and philosophy, and sense !'

This answer followed.—' You have turned my thoughts
 Upon our brave Progenitors, who rose 920
 Against idolatry with warlike mind,
 And shrunk from vain observances, to lurk
 In woods, and dwell under impending rocks
 Ill-sheltered, and oft wanting fire and food ;
 Why ?—for this very reason that they felt,
 And did acknowledge, wheresoe'er they moved,
 A spiritual presence, oft-times misconceived,
 But still a high dependence, a divine
 Bounty and government, that filled their hearts
 With joy, and gratitude, and fear, and love ; 930
 And from their fervent lips drew hymns of praise,
 That through the desert rang. Though favoured less,
 Far less, than these, yet such, in their degree,
 Were those bewildered Pagans of old time.
 Beyond their own poor natures and above
 They looked ; were humbly thankful for the good
 Which the warm sun solicited, and earth
 Bestowed ; were gladsome,—and their moral sense
 They fortified with reverence for the Gods ;
 And they had hopes that overstepped the Grave. 940

' Now, shall our great Discoverers,' he exclaimed,
 Raising his voice triumphantly, ' obtain
 From sense and reason less than these obtained,
 Though far misled ? Shall men for whom our age
 Unbaffled powers of vision hath prepared,
 To explore the world without and world within,
 Be joyless as the blind ? Ambitious spirits—
 Whom earth, at this late season, hath produced
 To regulate the moving spheres, and weigh
 The planets in the hollow of their hand ; 950
 And they who rather dive than soar, whose pains
 Have solved the elements, or analysed

The thinking principle—shall they in fact
 Prove a degraded Race? and what avails
 Renown, if their presumption make them such?
 Oh! there is laughter at their work in heaven!
 Inquire of ancient Wisdom; go, demand
 Of mighty Nature, if 'twas ever meant
 That we should pry far off yet be unraised;
 That we should pore, and dwindle as we pore,
 Viewing all objects unremittingly
 In disconnection dead and spiritless;
 And still dividing, and dividing still,
 Break down all grandeur, still unsatisfied
 With the perverse attempt, while littleness
 May yet become more little; waging thus
 An impious warfare with the very life
 Of our own souls!

960

And if indeed there be
 An all-pervading Spirit, upon whom
 Our dark foundations rest, could he design
 That this magnificent effect of power,
 The earth we tread, the sky that we behold
 By day, and all the pomp which night reveals;
 That these—and that superior mystery
 Our vital frame, so fearfully devised,
 And the dread soul within it—should exist
 Only to be examined, pondered, searched,
 Probed, vexed, and criticised?—Accuse me not
 Of arrogance, unknown Wanderer as I am,
 If, having walked with Nature threescore years,
 And offered, far as frailty would allow,
 My heart a daily sacrifice to Truth,
 I now affirm of Nature and of Truth,
 Whom I have served, that their DIVINITY
 Revolts, offended at the ways of men
 Swayed by such motives, to such ends employed;
 Philosophers, who, though the human soul
 Be of a thousand faculties composed,
 And twice ten thousand interests, do yet prize
 This soul, and the transcendent universe,
 No more than as a mirror that reflects
 To proud Self-love her own intelligence;
 That one, poor, finite object, in the abyss
 Of infinite Being, twinkling restlessly!

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‘Nor higher place can be assigned to him
 And his compeers—the laughing Sage of France.—
 Crowned was he, if my memory do not err,

With laurel planted upon hoary hairs,
 In sign of conquest by his wit achieved
 And benefits his wisdom had conferred ; 1000
 His stooping body tottered with wreaths of flowers
 Opprest, far less becoming ornaments
 Than Spring oft twines about a mouldering tree ;
 Yet so it pleased a fond, a vain, old Man,
 And a most frivolous people. Him I mean
 Who penned, to ridicule confiding faith,
 This sorry Legend ; which by chance we found
 Piled in a nook, through malice, as might seem,
 Among more innocent rubbish.'—Speaking thus,
 With a brief notice when, and how, and where, 1010
 We had espied the book, he drew it forth ;
 And courteously, as if the act removed,
 At once, all traces from the good Man's heart
 Of unbenign aversion or contempt,
 Restored it to its owner. ' Gentle Friend,'
 Herewith he grasped the Solitary's hand,
 ' You have known lights and guides better than these.
 Ah ! let not aught amiss within dispose
 A noble mind to practise on herself,
 And tempt opinion to support the wrongs 1020
 Of passion : whatsoe'er be felt or feared,
 From higher judgment-seats make no appeal
 To lower : can you question that the soul
 Inherits an allegiance, not by choice
 To be cast off, upon an oath proposed
 By each new upstart notion ? In the ports
 Of levity no refuge can be found,
 No shelter, for a spirit in distress.
 He, who by wilful disesteem of life
 And proud insensibility to hope, 1030
 Affronts the eye of Solitude, shall learn
 That her mild nature can be terrible ;
 That neither she nor Silence lack the power
 To avenge their own insulted majesty.

' O blest seclusion ! when the mind admits
 The law of duty ; and can therefore move
 Through each vicissitude of loss and gain,
 Linked in entire complacence with her choice ;
 When youth's presumptuousness is mellowed down,
 And manhood's vain anxiety dismissed ; 1040
 When wisdom shows her seasonable fruit,
 Upon the boughs of sheltering leisure hung
 In sober plenty ; when the spirit stoops

To drink with gratitude the crystal stream
 Of unreprieved enjoyment ; and is pleased
 To muse, and be saluted by the air
 Of meek repentance, wafting wallflower scents
 From out the crumbling ruins of fallen pride
 And chambers of transgression, now forlorn.
 O, calm contented days, and peaceful nights ! 1050
 Who, when such good can be obtained, would strive
 To reconcile his manhood to a couch
 Soft, as may seem, but, under that disguise,
 Stuffed with the thorny substance of the past
 For fixed annoyance ; and full oft beset
 With floating dreams, black and disconsolate,
 The vapoury phantoms of futurity ?

‘ Within the soul a faculty abides,
 That with interpositions, which would hide
 And darken, so can deal that they become 1060
 Contingencies of pomp ; and serve to exalt
 Her native brightness. As the ample moon,
 In the deep stillness of a summer even
 Rising behind a thick and lofty grove,
 Burns, like an unconsuming fire of light,
 In the green trees ; and, kindling on all sides
 Their leafy umbrage, turns the dusky veil
 Into a substance glorious as her own,
 Yea, with her own incorporated, by power
 Capacious and serene. Like power abides 1070
 In man’s celestial spirit ; virtue thus
 Sets forth and magnifies herself ; thus feeds
 A calm, a beautiful, and silent fire,
 From the encumbrances of mortal life,
 From error, disappointment—nay, from guilt ;
 And sometimes, so relenting justice wills,
 From palpable oppressions of despair.’

The Solitary by these words was touched
 With manifest emotion, and exclaimed ;
 ‘ But how begin ? and whence ?—“ The Mind is free—
 Resolve,” the haughty Moralist would say, 1081
 “ This single act is all that we demand.”
 Alas ! such wisdom bids a creature fly
 Whose very sorrow is, that time hath shorn
 His natural wings !—To friendship let him turn
 For succour ; but perhaps he sits alone
 On stormy waters, tossed in a little boat
 That holds but him, and can contain no more !

Religion tells of amity sublime
 Which no condition can preclude ; of One 1090
 Who sees all suffering, comprehends all wants,
 All weakness fathoms, can supply all needs :
 But is that bounty absolute ?—His gifts,
 Are they not, still, in some degree, rewards
 For acts of service ? Can his love extend
 To hearts that own not him ? Will showers of grace,
 When in the sky no promise may be seen,
 Fall to refresh a parched and withered land ?
 Or shall the groaning Spirit cast her load
 At the Redeemer's feet ?

In rueful tone, 1100
 With some impatience in his mien, he spake :
 Back to my mind rushed all that had been urged
 To calm the Sufferer when his story closed ;
 I looked for counsel as unbending now ;
 But a discriminating sympathy
 Stooped to this apt reply :—

‘ As men from men
 Do, in the constitution of their souls,
 Differ, by mystery not to be explained ;
 And as we fall by various ways, and sink
 One deeper than another, self-condemned, 1110
 Through manifold degrees of guilt and shame ;
 So manifold and various are the ways
 Of restoration, fashioned to the steps
 Of all infirmity, and tending all
 To the same point, attainable by all—
 Peace in ourselves, and union with our God.
 For you, assuredly, a hopeful road
 Lies open : we have heard from you a voice
 At every moment softened in its course
 By tenderness of heart ; have seen your eye, 1120
 Even like an altar lit by fire from heaven,
 Kindle before us.—Your discourse this day,
 That, like the fabled Lethe, wished to flow
 In creeping sadness, through oblivious shades
 Of death and night, has caught at every turn
 The colours of the sun. Access for you
 Is yet preserved to principles of truth,
 Which the imaginative Will upholds
 In seats of wisdom, not to be approached
 By the inferior Faculty that moulds, 1130
 With her minute and speculative pains,
 Opinion, ever changing !

I have seen

A curious child, who dwelt upon a tract
 Of inland ground, applying to his ear
 The convolutions of a smooth-lipped shell ;
 To which, in silence hushed, his very soul
 Listened intensely ; and his countenance soon
 Brightened with joy ; for from within were heard
 Murmurings, whereby the monitor expressed
 Mysterious union with its native sea.
 Even such a shell the universe itself
 Is to the ear of Faith ; and there are times,
 I doubt not, when to you it doth impart
 Authentic tidings of invisible things ;
 Of ebb and flow, and ever-during power ;
 And central peace, subsisting at the heart
 Of endless agitation. Here you stand,
 Adore, and worship, when you know it not ;
 Pious beyond the intention of your thought ;
 Devout above the meaning of your will.
 —Yes, you have felt, and may not cease to feel.
 The estate of man would be indeed forlorn
 If false conclusions of the reasoning power
 Made the eye blind, and closed the passages
 Through which the ear converses with the heart.
 Has not the soul, the being of your life,
 Received a shock of awful consciousness,
 In some calm season, when these lofty rocks
 At night's approach bring down the unclouded sky,
 To rest upon their circumambient walls ;
 A temple framing of dimensions vast,
 And yet not too enormous for the sound
 Of human anthems,—choral song, or burst
 Sublime of instrumental harmony,
 To glorify the Eternal ! What if these
 Did never break the stillness that prevails
 Here,—if the solemn nightingale be mute,
 And the soft woodlark here did never chant
 Her vespers,—Nature fails not to provide
 Impulse and utterance. The whispering air
 Sends inspiration from the shadowy heights,
 And blind recesses of the caverned rocks ;
 The little rills, and waters numberless,
 Inaudible by daylight, blend their notes
 With the loud streams : and often, at the hour
 When issue forth the first pale stars, is heard,
 Within the circuit of this fabric huge,
 One voice—the solitary raven, flying
 Athwart the concave of the dark blue dome,

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Unseen, perchance above all power of sight— 1180
 An iron knell! with echoes from afar
 Faint—and still fainter—as the cry, with which
 The wanderer accompanies her flight
 Through the calm region, fades upon the ear,
 Diminishing by distance till it seemed
 To expire; yet from the abyss is caught again,
 And yet again recovered!

But descending
 From these imaginative heights, that yield
 Far-stretching views into eternity,
 Acknowledge that to Nature's humbler power 1190
 Your cherished sullenness is forced to bend
 Even here, where her amenities are sown
 With sparing hand. Then trust yourself abroad
 To range her blooming bowers, and spacious fields,
 Where on the labours of the happy throng
 She smiles, including in her wide embrace
 City, and town, and tower,—and sea with ships
 Sprinkled;—be our Companion while we track
 Her rivers populous with gliding life;
 While, free as air, o'er printless sands we march, 1200
 Or pierce the gloom of her majestic woods;
 Roaming, or resting under grateful shade
 In peace and meditative cheerfulness;
 Where living things, and things inanimate,
 Do speak, at Heaven's command, to eye and ear,
 And speak to social reason's inner sense,
 With inarticulate language.

For, the Man—
 Who, in this spirit, communes with the Forms
 Of nature, who with understanding heart
 Both knows and loves such objects as excite 1210
 No morbid passions, no disquietude,
 No vengeance, and no hatred—needs must feel
 The joy of that pure principle of love
 So deeply, that, unsatisfied with aught
 Less pure and exquisite, he cannot choose
 But seek for objects of a kindred love
 In fellow-natures and a kindred joy.
 Accordingly he by degrees perceives
 His feelings of aversion softened down;
 A holy tenderness pervade his frame. 1220
 His sanity of reason not impaired,
 Say rather, all his thoughts now flowing clear,
 From a clear fountain flowing, he looks round
 And seeks for good; and finds the good he seeks:

Until abhorrence and contempt are things
 He only knows by name ; and, if he hear,
 From other mouths, the language which they speak,
 He is compassionate ; and has no thought,
 No feeling, which can overcome his love.

‘ And further ; by contemplating these Forms 1230
 In the relations which they bear to man,
 He shall discern, how, through the various means
 Which silently they yield, are multiplied
 The spiritual presences of absent things.
 Trust me, that for the instructed, time will come
 When they shall meet no object but may teach
 Some acceptable lesson to their minds
 Of human suffering, or of human joy.
 So shall they learn, while all things speak of man,
 Their duties from all forms ; and general laws, 1240
 And local accidents, shall tend alike
 To rouse, to urge ; and, with the will, confer
 The ability to spread the blessings wide
 Of true philanthropy. The light of love
 Not failing, perseverance from their steps
 Departing not, for them shall be confirmed
 The glorious habit by which sense is made
 Subservient still to moral purposes,
 Auxiliar to divine. That change shall clothe
 The naked spirit, ceasing to deplore 1250
 The burthen of existence. Science then
 Shall be a precious visitant ; and then,
 And only then, be worthy of her name :
 For then her heart shall kindle ; her dull eye,
 Dull and inanimate, no more shall hang
 Chained to its object in brute slavery ;
 But taught with patient interest to watch
 The processes of things, and serve the cause
 Of order and distinctness, not for this
 Shall it forget that its most noble use, 1260
 Its most illustrious province, must be found
 In furnishing clear guidance, a support
 Not treacherous, to the mind’s *excursive* power.
 —So build we up the Being that we are ;
 Thus deeply drinking-in the soul of things,
 We shall be wise perforce ; and, while inspired
 By choice, and conscious that the Will is free,
 Shall move unswerving, even as if impelled
 By strict necessity, along the path
 Of order and of good. Whate’er we see, 1270

Or feel, shall tend to quicken and refine ;
 Shall fix, in calmer seats of moral strength,
 Earthly desires ; and raise, to loftier heights
 Of divine love, our intellectual soul.'

Here closed the Sage that eloquent harangue,
 Poured forth with fervour in continuous stream,
 Such as, remote, 'mid savage wilderness,
 An Indian Chief discharges from his breast
 Into the hearing of assembled tribes,
 In open circle seated round, and hushed 1280
 As the unbreathing air, when not a leaf
 Stirs in the mighty woods.—So did he speak :
 The words he uttered shall not pass away
 Dispersed, like music that the wind takes up
 By snatches, and lets fall, to be forgotten ;
 No—they sank into me, the bounteous gift
 Of one whom time and nature had made wise,
 Gracing his doctrine with authority
 Which hostile spirits silently allow ;
 Of one accustomed to desires that feed 1290
 On fruitage gathered from the tree of life,
 To hopes on knowledge and experience built,
 Of one in whom persuasion and belief
 Had ripened into faith, and faith become
 A passionate intuition ; whence the Soul,
 Though bound to earth by ties of pity and love,
 From all injurious servitude was free.

The Sun, before his place of rest were reached,
 Had yet to travel far, but unto us,
 To us who stood low in that hollow dell, 1300
 He had become invisible,—a pomp
 Leaving behind of yellow radiance spread
 Over the mountain-sides, in contrast bold
 With ample shadows, seemingly, no less
 Than those resplendent lights, his rich bequest ;
 A dispensation of his evening power.
 —Adown the path that from the glen had led
 The funeral train, the Shepherd and his Mate
 Were seen descending :—forth to greet them ran
 Our little Page : the rustic pair approach ; 1310
 And in the Matron's countenance may be read
 Plain indication that the words, which told
 How that neglected Pensioner was sent
 Before his time into a quiet grave,
 Had done to her humanity no wrong :

But we are kindly welcomed—promptly served
 With ostentatious zeal.—Along the floor
 Of the small Cottage in the lonely Dell
 A grateful couch was spread for our repose;
 Where, in the guise of mountaineers, we lay, 1320
 Stretched upon fragrant heath, and lulled by sound
 Of far-off torrents charming the still night,
 And, to tired limbs and over-busy thoughts,
 Inviting sleep and soft forgetfulness.

BOOK FIFTH

THE PASTOR

ARGUMENT

FAREWELL to the Valley.—Reflections.—A large and populous Vale described.—The Pastor's Dwelling, and some account of him.—Church and Monuments.—The Solitary musing, and where.—Roused.—In the Churchyard the Solitary communicates the thoughts which had recently passed through his mind.—Lofty tone of the Wanderer's discourse of yesterday adverted to.—Rite of Baptism, and the professions accompanying it, contrasted with the real state of human life.—Apology for the Rite.—Inconsistency of the best men.—Acknowledgment that practice falls far below the injunctions of duty as existing in the mind.—General complaint of a falling-off in the value of life after the time of youth.—Outward appearances of content and happiness in degree illusive.—Pastor approaches.—Appeal made to him.—His answer.—Wanderer in sympathy with him.—Suggestion that the least ambitious enquirers may be most free from error.—The Pastor is desired to give some portraits of the living or dead from his own observation of life among these Mountains—and for what purpose.—Pastor consents.—Mountain cottage.—Excellent qualities of its Inhabitants.—Solitary expresses his pleasure; but denies the praise of virtue to worth of this kind.—Feelings of the Priest before he enters upon his account of persons interred in the Churchyard.—Graves of unbaptized Infants.—Funeral and sepulchral observances, whence.—Ecclesiastical Establishments, whence derived.—Profession of belief in the doctrine of Immortality.

FAREWELL, deep Valley, with thy one rude House,
 And its small lot of life-supporting fields,
 And guardian rocks!—Farewell, attractive seat!
 To the still influx of the morning light
 Open, and day's pure cheerfulness, but veiled
 From human observation, as if yet
 Primeval forests wrapped thee round with dark
 Impenetrable shade; once more farewell,
 Majestic circuit, beautiful abyss,
 By Nature destined from the birth of things 10
 For quietness profound!

Upon the side

Of that brown ridge, sole outlet of the vale
Which foot of boldest stranger would attempt,
Lingering behind my comrades, thus I breathed
A parting tribute to a spot that seemed
Like the fixed centre of a troubled world.
Again I halted with reverted eyes ;
The chain that would not slacken, was at length
Snapt,—and, pursuing leisurely my way,
How vain, thought I, is it by change of place 20
To seek that comfort which the mind denies ;
Yet trial and temptation oft are shunned
Wisely ; and by such tenure do we hold
Frail life's possessions, that even they whose fate
Yields no peculiar reason of complaint
Might, by the promise that is here, be won
To steal from active duties, and embrace
Obscurity, and undisturbed repose.
—Knowledge, methinks, in these disordered times,
Should be allowed a privilege to have 30
Her anchorites, like piety of old ;
Men, who, from faction sacred, and unstained
By war, might, if so minded, turn aside
Uncensured, and subsist, a scattered few
Living to God and nature, and content
With that communion. Consecrated be
The spots where such abide ! But happier still
The Man, whom, furthermore, a hope attends
That meditation and research may guide
His privacy to principles and powers 40
Discovered or invented ; or set forth,
Through his acquaintance with the ways of truth,
In lucid order ; so that, when his course
Is run, some faithful eulogist may say,
He sought not praise, and praise did overlook
His unobtrusive merit ; but his life,
Sweet to himself, was exercised in good
That shall survive his name and memory.

Acknowledgments of gratitude sincere
Accompanied these musings ; fervent thanks 50
For my own peaceful lot and happy choice ;
A choice that from the passions of the world
Withdrew, and fixed me in a still retreat ;
Sheltered, but not to social duties lost,
Secluded, but not buried ; and with song
Cheering my days, and with industrious thought ;
With the ever-welcome company of books ;

With virtuous friendship's soul-sustaining aid,
And with the blessings of domestic love.

Thus occupied in mind I paced along,
Following the rugged road, by sledge or wheel
Worn in the moorland, till I overtook
My two Associates, in the morning sunshine
Halting together on a rocky knoll,
Whence the bare road descended rapidly
To the green meadows of another vale.

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Here did our pensive Host put forth his hand
In sign of farewell. 'Nay,' the old Man said,
'The fragrant air its coolness still retains;
The herds and flocks are yet abroad to crop
The dewy grass; you cannot leave us now,
We must not part at this inviting hour.'
He yielded, though reluctant; for his mind
Instinctively disposed him to retire
To his own covert; as a billow, heaved
Upon the beach, rolls back into the sea.
—So we descend: and winding round a rock
Attain a point that showed the valley—stretched
In length before us; and, not distant far,
Upon a rising ground a grey church-tower,
Whose battlements were screened by tufted trees.
And towards a crystal Mere, that lay beyond
Among steep hills and woods embosomed, flowed
A copious stream with boldly-winding course;
Here traceable, there hidden—there again
To sight restored, and glittering in the sun.
On the stream's bank, and everywhere, appeared
Fair dwellings, single, or in social knots;
Some scattered o'er the level, others perched
On the hill-sides, a cheerful quiet scene,
Now in its morning purity arrayed.

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'As 'mid some happy valley of the Alps,'
Said I, 'once happy, ere tyrannic power,
Wantonly breaking in upon the Swiss,
Destroyed their unoffending commonwealth,
A popular equality reigns here,
Save for yon stately House beneath whose roof
A rural lord might dwell.'—'No feudal pomp,
Or power,' replied the Wanderer, 'to that House
Belongs, but there in his allotted Home
Abides, from year to year, a genuine Priest,

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The shepherd of his flock ; or, as a king
 Is styled, when most affectionately praised,
 The father of his people. Such is he ;
 And rich and poor, and young and old, rejoice
 Under his spiritual sway. He hath vouchsafed
 To me some portion of a kind regard ;
 And something also of his inner mind
 Hath he imparted—but I speak of him
 As he is known to all.

The calm delights

110

Of unambitious piety he chose,
 And learning's solid dignity ; though born
 Of knightly race, nor wanting powerful friends.
 Hither, in prime of manhood, he withdrew
 From academic bowers. He loved the spot—
 Who does not love his native soil ?—he prized
 The ancient rural character, composed
 Of simple manners, feelings unsuppressed
 And undisguised, and strong and serious thought ;
 A character reflected in himself, 120
 With such embellishment as well beseems
 His rank and sacred function. This deep vale
 Winds far in reaches hidden from our sight,
 And one a turreted manorial hall
 Adorns, in which the good Man's ancestors
 Have dwelt through ages—Patrons of this Cure.
 To them, and to his own judicious pains,
 The Vicar's dwelling, and the whole domain,
 Owes that presiding aspect which might well
 Attract your notice ; statelier than could else 130
 Have been bestowed, through course of common chance,
 On an unwealthy mountain Benefice.'

This said, oft pausing, we pursued our way ;
 Nor reached the village-churchyard till the sun
 Travelling at steadier pace than ours, had risen
 Above the summits of the highest hills,
 And round our path darted oppressive beams.

As chanced, the portals of the sacred Pile
 Stood open ; and we entered. On my frame,
 At such transition from the fervid air, 140
 A grateful coolness fell, that seemed to strike
 The heart, in concert with that temperate awe
 And natural reverence which the place inspired.
 Not raised in nice proportions was the pile,
 But large and massy ; for duration built ;

With pillars crowded, and the roof upheld
 By naked rafters intricately crossed,
 Like leafless underboughs, in some thick wood,
 All withered by the depth of shade above.
 Admonitory texts inscribed the walls, 150
 Each, in its ornamental scroll, enclosed;
 Each also crowned with wingèd heads—a pair
 Of rudely-painted Cherubim. The floor
 Of nave and aisle, in unpretending guise,
 Was occupied by oaken benches ranged
 In seemly rows; the chancel only showed
 Some vain distinctions, marks of earthly state
 By immemorial privilege allowed;
 Though with the Encincture's special sanctity
 But ill according. An heraldic shield, 160
 Varying its tincture with the changeful light,
 Imbued the altar-window; fixed aloft
 A faded hatchment hung, and one by time
 Yet undiscoloured. A capacious pew
 Of sculptured oak stood here, with drapery lined;
 And marble monuments were here displayed
 Thronging the walls; and on the floor beneath
 Sepulchral stones appeared, with emblems graven
 And foot-worn epitaphs, and some with small
 And shining effigies of brass inlaid. 170

The tribute, by these various records claimed,
 Duly we paid, each after each, and read
 The ordinary chronicle of birth,
 Office, alliance, and promotion—all
 Ending in dust; of upright magistrates,
 Grave doctors strenuous for the mother-church,
 And uncorrupted senators, alike
 To king and people true. A brazen plate,
 Not easily deciphered, told of one
 Whose course of earthly honour was begun 180
 In quality of page among the train
 Of the eighth Henry, when he crossed the seas
 His royal state to show, and prove his strength
 In tournament, upon the fields of France.
 Another tablet registered the death,
 And praised the gallant bearing, of a Knight
 Tried in the sea-fights of the second Charles.
 Near this brave Knight his Father lay entombed;
 And, to the silent language giving voice,
 I read,—how in his manhood's earlier day 190
 He 'mid the afflictions of intestine war

And rightful government subverted, found
 One only solace—that he had espoused
 A virtuous Lady tenderly beloved
 For her benign perfections; and yet more
 Endear'd to him for this, that, in her state
 Of wedlock richly crowned with Heaven's regard,
 She with a numerous issue filled his house,
 Who throve, like plants, uninjured by the storm
 That laid their country waste. No need to speak 200
 Of less particular notices assigned
 To Youth or Maiden gone before their time,
 And Matrons and unwedded Sisters old;
 Whose charity and goodness were rehearsed
 In modest panegyric.

‘These dim lines,
 What would they tell?’ said I,—but, from the task
 Of puzzling out that faded narrative,
 With whisper soft my venerable Friend
 Called me; and, looking down the darksome aisle,
 I saw the Tenant of the lonely vale 210
 Standing apart; with curvèd arm reclined
 On the baptismal font; his pallid face
 Upturned, as if his mind were rapt, or lost
 In some abstraction;—gracefully he stood,
 The semblance bearing of a sculptured form
 That leans upon a monumental urn
 In peace, from morn to night, from year to year.

Him from that posture did the Sexton rouse;
 Who entered, humming carelessly a tune,
 Continuation haply of the notes 220
 That had beguiled the work from which he came,
 With spade and mattock o’er his shoulder hung;
 To be deposited, for future need,
 In their appointed place. The pale Recluse
 Withdrew; and straight we followed,—to a spot
 Where sun and shade were intermixed; for there
 A broad oak, stretching forth its leafy arms
 From an adjoining pasture, overhung
 Small space of that green churchyard with a light
 And pleasant awning. On the moss-grown wall 230
 My ancient Friend and I together took
 Our seats; and thus the Solitary spake,
 Standing before us:—

‘Did you note the mien
 Of that self-solaced, easy-hearted churl,
 Death’s hireling, who scoops out his neighbour’s grave,

Or wraps an old acquaintance up in clay,
 All unconcerned as he would bind a sheaf,
 Or plant a tree? And did you hear his voice?
 I was abruptly summoned by the sound
 From some affecting images and thoughts, 240
 Which then were silent; but crave utterance now.

‘Much,’ he continued, with dejected look,
 ‘Much, yesterday, was said in glowing phrase
 Of our sublime dependencies, and hopes
 For future states of being; and the wings
 Of speculation, joyfully outspread,
 Hovered above our destiny on earth:
 But stoop, and place the prospect of the soul
 In sober contrast with reality,
 And man’s substantial life. If this mute earth 250
 Of what it holds could speak, and every grave
 Were as a volume, shut, yet capable
 Of yielding its contents to eye and ear,
 We should recoil, stricken with sorrow and shame,
 To see disclosed, by such dread proof, how ill
 That which is done accords with what is known
 To reason, and by conscience is enjoined;
 How idly, how perversely, life’s whole course,
 To this conclusion, deviates from the line,
 Or of the end stops short, proposed to all 260
 At her aspiring outset.

Mark the babe
 Not long accustomed to this breathing world;
 One that hath barely learned to shape a smile,
 Though yet irrational of soul—to grasp
 With tiny finger—to let fall a tear;
 And, as the heavy cloud of sleep dissolves,
 To stretch his limbs, bemocking, as might seem,
 The outward functions of intelligent man;
 A grave proficient in amusive feats
 Of puppetry, that from the lap declare 270
 His expectations, and announce his claims
 To that inheritance which millions rue
 That they were ever born to! In due time
 A day of solemn ceremonial comes;
 When they, who for this Minor hold in trust
 Rights that transcend the loftiest heritage
 Of mere humanity, present their Charge,
 For this occasion daintily adorned,
 At the baptismal font. And when the pure
 And consecrating element hath cleansed 280

The original stain, the child is there received
 Into the second ark, Christ's church, with trust
 That he, from wrath redeemed, therein shall float
 Over the billows of this troublesome world
 To the fair land of everlasting life.
 Corrupt affections, covetous desires,
 Are all renounced ; high as the thought of man
 Can carry virtue, virtue is professed ;
 A dedication made, a promise given
 For due provision to control and guide, 290
 And unremitting progress to ensure
 In holiness and truth.'

' You cannot blame,'
 Here interposing fervently I said,
 ' Rites which attest that Man by nature lies
 Bedded for good and evil in a gulf
 Fearfully low ; nor will your judgment scorn
 Those services, whereby attempt is made
 To lift the creature toward that eminence
 On which, now fallen, erewhile in majesty
 He stood ; or if not so, whose top serene 300
 At least he feels 'tis given him to descry ;
 Not without aspirations, evermore
 Returning, and injunctions from within
 Doubt to cast off and weariness ; in trust
 That what the Soul perceives, if glory lost,
 May be, through pains and persevering hope,
 Recovered ; or, if hitherto unknown,
 Lies within reach, and one day shall be gained.'

' I blame them not,' he calmly answered—' no ;
 The outward ritual and established forms 310
 With which communities of men invest
 These inward feelings, and the aspiring vows
 To which the lips give public utterance
 Are both a natural process ; and by me
 Shall pass uncensured ; though the issue prove,
 Bringing from age to age its own reproach,
 Incongruous, impotent, and blank.—But, oh !
 If to be weak is to be wretched—miserable,
 As the lost Angel by a human voice
 Hath mournfully pronounced, then, in my mind, 320
 Far better not to move at all than move
 By impulse sent from such illusive power,—
 That finds and cannot fasten down ; that grasps
 And is rejoiced, and loses while it grasps ;
 That tempts, emboldens—for a time sustains,

And then betrays ; accuses and inflicts
 Remorseless punishment ; and so retreads
 The inevitable circle : better far
 Than this, to graze the herb in thoughtless peace,
 By foresight, or remembrance, undisturbed !

330

‘ Philosophy ! and thou more vaunted name
 Religion ! with thy statelier retinue,
 Faith, Hope, and Charity—from the visible world
 Choose for your emblems whatsoe’er ye find
 Of safest guidance or of firmest trust—
 The torch, the star, the anchor ; nor except
 The cross itself, at whose unconscious feet
 The generations of mankind have knelt
 Ruefully seized, and shedding bitter tears,
 And through that conflict seeking rest—of you
 High-titled Powers, am I constrained to ask,
 Here standing, with the unvoyageable sky
 In faint reflection of infinitude
 Stretched overhead, and at my pensive feet
 A subterraneous magazine of bones,
 In whose dark vaults my own shall soon be laid,
 Where are your triumphs ? your dominion where ?
 And in what age admitted and confirmed ?
 —Not for a happy land do I enquire,
 Island or grove, that hides a blessed few
 Who, with obedience willing and sincere,
 To your serene authorities conform ;
 But whom, I ask, of individual Souls,
 Have ye withdrawn from passion’s crooked ways,
 Inspired, and thoroughly fortified ?—If the heart
 Could be inspected to its inmost folds
 By sight undazzled with the glare of praise,
 Who shall be named—in the resplendent line
 Of sages, martyrs, confessors—the man
 Whom the best might of faith, wherever fixed,
 For one day’s little compass, has preserved
 From painful and discreditable shocks
 Of contradiction, from some vague desire
 Culpably cherished, or corrupt relapse
 To some unsanctioned fear ?’

340

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360

‘ If this be so,
 And Man,’ said I, ‘ be in his noblest shape
 Thus pitiable infirm ; then, he who made,
 And who shall judge the creature, will forgive.
 —Yet, in its general tenor, your complaint
 Is all too true ; and surely not misplaced :

370

For, from this pregnant spot of ground, such thoughts
 Rise to the notice of a serious mind
 By natural exhalation. With the dead
 In their repose, the living in their mirth,
 Who can reflect, unmoved, upon the round
 Of smooth and solemnized complacencies,
 By which, on Christian lands, from age to age
 Profession mocks performance? Earth is sick,
 And Heaven is weary, of the hollow words
 Which States and Kingdoms utter when they talk 380
 Of truth and justice. Turn to private life
 And social neighbourhood; look we to ourselves;
 A light of duty shines on every day
 For all; and yet how few are warmed or cheered!
 How few who mingle with their fellow-men
 And still remain self-governed, and apart,
 Like this our honoured Friend; and thence acquire
 Right to expect his vigorous decline,
 That promises to the end a blest old age!

‘Yet,’ with a smile of triumph thus exclaimed 390
 The Solitary, ‘in the life of man,
 If to the poetry of common speech
 Faith may be given, we see as in a glass
 A true reflection of the circling year,
 With all its seasons. Grant that Spring is there,
 In spite of many a rough untoward blast,
 Hopeful and promising with buds and flowers;
 Yet where is glowing Summer’s long rich day,
 That *ought* to follow faithfully expressed?
 And mellow Autumn, charged with bounteous fruit,
 Where is she imaged? in what favoured clime 401
 Her lavish pomp, and ripe magnificence?
 —Yet, while the better part is missed, the worse
 In man’s autumnal season is set forth
 With a resemblance not to be denied,
 And that contents him; bowers that hear no more
 The voice of gladness, less and less supply
 Of outward sunshine and internal warmth;
 And, with this change, sharp air and falling leaves,
 Foretelling aged Winter’s desolate sway. 410

‘How gay the habitations that bedeck
 This fertile valley! Not a house but seems
 To give assurance of content within;
 Embosomed happiness, and placid love;
 As if the sunshine of the day were met

With answering brightness in the hearts of all
 Who walk this favoured ground. But chance-regards,
 And notice forced upon incurious ears,
 These, if these only, acting in despite
 Of the encomiums by my Friend pronounced 420
 On humble life, forbid the judging mind
 To trust the smiling aspect of this fair
 And noiseless commonwealth. The simple race
 Of mountaineers (by nature's self removed
 From foul temptations, and by constant care
 Of a good shepherd tended as themselves
 Do tend their flocks) partake man's general lot
 With little mitigation. They escape,
 Perchance, the heavier woes of guilt; feel not
 The tedium of fantastic idleness: 430
 Yet life, as with the multitude, with them
 Is fashioned like an ill-constructed tale;
 That on the outset wastes its gay desires,
 Its fair adventures, its enlivening hopes,
 And pleasant interests—for the sequel leaving
 Old things repeated with diminished grace;
 And all the laboured novelties at best
 Imperfect substitutes, whose use and power
 Evince the want and weakness whence they spring.'

While in this serious mood we held discourse, 440
 The reverend Pastor toward the churchyard gate
 Approached; and, with a mild respectful air
 Of native cordiality, our Friend
 Advanced to greet him. With a gracious mien
 Was he received, and mutual joy prevailed.
 Awhile they stood in conference, and I guess
 That he, who now upon the mossy wall
 Sate by my side, had vanished, if a wish
 Could have transferred him to the flying clouds,
 Or the least penetrable hiding-place 450
 In his own valley's rocky guardianship.
 —For me, I looked upon the pair, well pleased:
 Nature had framed them both, and both were marked
 By circumstance, with intermixture fine
 Of contrast and resemblance. To an oak
 Hardy and grand, a weather-beaten oak,
 Fresh in the strength and majesty of age,
 One might be likened: flourishing appeared,
 Though somewhat past the fulness of his prime,
 The other—like a stately sycamore, 460
 That spreads, in gentle pomp, its honied shade.

A general greeting was exchanged ; and soon
 The Pastor learned that his approach had given
 A welcome interruption to discourse
 Grave, and in truth too often sad.—‘ Is Man
 A child of hope ? Do generations press
 On generations, without progress made ?
 Halts the individual, ere his hairs be grey,
 Perforce ? Are we a creature in whom good
 Preponderates, or evil ? Doth the will
 Acknowledge reason’s law ? A living power
 Is virtue, or no better than a name,
 Fleeting as health or beauty, and unsound ?
 So that the only substance which remains,
 (For thus the tenor of complaint hath run)
 Among so many shadows, are the pains
 And penalties of miserable life,
 Doomed to decay, and then expire in dust !
 —Our cogitations this way have been drawn,
 These are the points,’ the Wanderer said, ‘on which 480
 Our inquest turns.—Accord, good Sir ! the light
 Of your experience to dispel this gloom :
 By your persuasive wisdom shall the heart
 That frets, or languishes, be stilled and cheered.’

‘ Our nature,’ said the Priest, in mild reply,
 ‘ Angels may weigh and fathom : they perceive,
 With undistempered and unclouded spirit,
 The object as it is ; but, for ourselves,
 That speculative height *we* may not reach.
 The good and evil are our own ; and we
 Are that which we would contemplate from far. 490
 Knowledge, for us, is difficult to gain—
 Is difficult to gain, and hard to keep—
 As virtue’s self ; like virtue is beset
 With snares ; tried, tempted, subject to decay.
 Love, admiration, fear, desire, and hate,
 Blind were we without these : through these alone
 Are capable to notice or discern
 Or to record ; we judge, but cannot be
 Indifferent judges. ’Spite of proudest boast,
 Reason, best reason, is to imperfect man
 An effort only, and a noble aim ;
 A crown, an attribute of sovereign power,
 Still to be courted—never to be won.
 —Look forth, or each man dive into himself ;
 What sees he but a creature too perturbed ;
 That is transported to excess ; that yearns,

Regrets, or trembles, wrongly, or too much ;
 Hopes rashly, in disgust as rash recoils ;
 Battens on spleen, or moulders in despair ?
 Thus comprehension fails, and truth is missed ;
 Thus darkness and delusion round our path
 Spread, from disease, whose subtle injury lurks
 Within the very faculty of sight.

510

‘ Yet for the general purposes of faith
 In Providence, for solace and support,
 We may not doubt that who can best subject
 The will to reason’s law, can strictliest live
 And act in that obedience, he shall gain
 The clearest apprehension of those truths,
 Which unassisted reason’s utmost power
 Is too infirm to reach. But, waiving this,
 And our regards confining within bounds
 Of less exalted consciousness, through which
 The very multitude are free to range,
 We safely may affirm that human life
 Is either fair and tempting, a soft scene
 Grateful to sight, refreshing to the soul,
 Or a forbidding tract of cheerless view ;
 Even as the same is looked at, or approached.
 Thus, when in changeful April fields are white
 With new-fallen snow, if from the sullen north
 Your walk conduct you hither, ere the sun
 Hath gained his noontide height, this churchyard, filled
 With mounds transversely lying side by side
 From east to west, before you will appear
 An unillumined, blank, and dreary, plain,
 With more than wintry cheerlessness and gloom
 Saddening the heart. Go forward, and look back ;
 Look, from the quarter whence the lord of light,
 Of life, of love, and gladness, doth dispense
 His beams ; which, unexcluded in their fall,
 Upon the southern side of every grave
 Have gently exercised a melting power ;
 Then will a vernal prospect greet your eye,
 All fresh and beautiful, and green and bright,
 Hopeful and cheerful :—vanished is the pall
 That overspread and chilled the sacred turf,
 Vanished or hidden ; and the whole domain,
 To some, too lightly minded, might appear
 A meadow carpet for the dancing hours.
 —This contrast, not unsuitable to life,
 Is to that other state more apposite,

520

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Death and its two-fold aspect ! wintry—one,
Cold, sullen, blank, from hope and joy shut out ;
The other, which the ray divine hath touched,
Replete with vivid promise, bright as spring.'

'We see, then, as we feel,' the Wanderer thus
With a complacent animation spake,
'And in your judgment, Sir ! the mind's repose 560
On evidence is not to be ensured
By act of naked reason. Moral truth
Is no mechanic structure, built by rule ;
And which, once built, retains a steadfast shape
And undisturbed proportions ; but a thing
Subject, you deem, to vital accidents ;
And, like the water-lily, lives and thrives,
Whose root is fixed in stable earth, whose head
Floats on the tossing waves. With joy sincere
I re-salute these sentiments confirmed 570
By your authority. But how acquire
The inward principle that gives effect
To outward argument ; the passive will
Meek to admit ; the active energy,
Strong and unbounded to embrace, and firm
To keep and cherish ? how shall man unite
With self-forgetting tenderness of heart
An earth-despising dignity of soul ?
Wise in that union, and without it blind !'

'The way,' said I, 'to court, if not obtain 580
The ingenuous mind, apt to be set aright ;
This, in the lonely dell discoursing, you
Declared at large ; and by what exercise
From visible nature or the inner self
Power may be trained, and renovation brought
To those who need the gift. But, after all,
Is aught so certain as that man is doomed
To breathe beneath a vault of ignorance ?
The natural roof of that dark house in which
His soul is pent ! How little can be known— 590
This is the wise man's sigh ; how far we err—
This is the good man's not unfrequent pang !
And they perhaps err least, the lowly class
Whom a benign necessity compels
To follow reason's least ambitious course ;
Such do I mean who, unperplexed by doubt,
And uncited by a wish to look
Into high objects farther than they may,

Pace to and fro, from morn till even-tide,
The narrow avenue of daily toil
For daily bread.'

600

'Yes,' buoyantly exclaimed
The pale Recluse—'praise to the sturdy plough,
And patient spade; praise to the simple crook,
And ponderous loom—resounding while it holds
Body and mind in one captivity;
And let the light mechanic tool be hailed
With honour; which, encasing by the power
Of long companionship, the artist's hand,
Cuts off that hand, with all its world of nerves,
From a too busy commerce with the heart!
—Inglorious implements of craft and toil,
Both ye that shape and build, and ye that force,
By slow solicitation, earth to yield
Her annual bounty, sparingly dealt forth
With wise reluctance; you would I extol,
Not for gross good alone which ye produce,
But for the impertinent and ceaseless strife
Of proofs and reasons ye preclude—in those
Who to your dull society are born,
And with their humble birthright rest content.
—Would I had ne'er renounced it!'

610

620

A slight flush

Of moral anger previously had tinged
The old Man's cheek; but, at this closing turn
Of self-reproach, it passed away. Said he,
'That which we feel we utter; as we think
So have we argued; reaping for our pains
No visible recompense. For our relief
You,' to the Pastor turning thus he spake,
'Have kindly interposed. May I entreat
Your further help? The mine of real life
Dig for us; and present us, in the shape
Of virgin ore, that gold which we, by pains
Fruitless as those of æry alchemists,
Seek from the torturing crucible. There lies
Around us a domain where you have long
Watched both the outward course and inner heart:
Give us, for our abstractions, solid facts;
For our disputes, plain pictures. Say what man
He is who cultivates yon hanging field;
What qualities of mind she bears, who comes,
For morn and evening service, with her pail,
To that green pasture; place before our sight
The family who dwell within yon house

630

640

Fenced round with glittering laurel ; or in that
 Below, from which the curling smoke ascends.
 Or rather, as we stand on holy earth,
 And have the dead around us, take from them
 Your instances ; for they are both best known,
 And by frail man most equitably judged.
 Epitomise the life ; pronounce, you can,
 Authentic epitaphs on some of these
 Who, from their lowly mansions hither brought,
 Beneath this turf lie mouldering at our feet :
 So, by your records, may our doubts be solved ;
 And so, not searching higher, we may learn
To prize the breath we share with human kind ;
And look upon the dust of man with awe.

650

The Priest replied—‘ An office you impose
 For which peculiar requisites are mine ;
 Yet much, I feel, is wanting—else the task
 Would be most grateful. True indeed it is
 That they whom death has hidden from our sight
 Are worthiest of the mind’s regard ; with these
 The future cannot contradict the past :
 Mortality’s last exercise and proof
 Is undergone ; the transit made that shows
 The very Soul, revealed as she departs.
 Yet, on your first suggestion, will I give,
 Ere we descend into these silent vaults,
 One picture from the living.

660

You behold,
 High on the breast of yon dark mountain, dark
 With stony barrenness, a shining speck
 Bright as a sunbeam sleeping till a shower
 Brush it away, or cloud pass over it ;
 And such it might be deemed—a sleeping sunbeam ;
 But ’tis a plot of cultivated ground,
 Cut off, an island in the dusky waste ;
 And that attractive brightness is its own.
 The lofty site, by nature framed to tempt
 Amid a wilderness of rocks and stones
 The tiller’s hand, a hermit might have chosen,
 For opportunity presented, thence
 Far forth to send his wandering eye o’er land
 And ocean, and look down upon the works,
 The habitations, and the ways of men,
 Himself unseen ! But no tradition tells
 That ever hermit dipped his maple dish
 In the sweet spring that lurks ’mid yon green fields ;

670

680

And no such visionary views belong
 To those who occupy and till the ground, 690
 High on that mountain where they long have dwelt
 A wedded pair in childless solitude.
 A house of stones collected on the spot,
 By rude hands built, with rocky knolls in front,
 Backed also by a ledge of rock, whose crest
 Of birch-trees waves over the chimney-top ;
 A rough abode—in colour, shape, and size,
 Such as in unsafe times of border-war
 Might have been wished for and contrived, to elude
 The eye of roving plunderer—for their need 700
 Suffices ; and unshaken bears the assault
 Of their most dreaded foe, the strong South-west
 In anger blowing from the distant sea.
 —Alone within her solitary hut ;
 There, or within the compass of her fields,
 At any moment may the Dame be found,
 True as the stock-dove to her shallow nest
 And to the grove that holds it. She beguiles
 By intermingled work of house and field
 The summer's day, and winter's ; with success 710
 Not equal, but sufficient to maintain,
 Even at the worst, a smooth stream of content,
 Until the expected hour at which her Mate
 From the far-distant quarry's vault returns ;
 And by his converse crowns a silent day
 With evening cheerfulness. In powers of mind,
 In scale of culture, few among my flock
 Hold lower rank than this sequestered pair :
 But true humility descends from heaven ;
 And that best gift of heaven hath fallen on them ; 720
 Abundant recompense for every want.
 —Stoop from your height, ye proud, and copy
 these !
 Who, in their noiseless dwelling-place, can hear
 The voice of wisdom whispering scripture texts
 For the mind's government, or temper's peace ;
 And recommending for their mutual need,
 Forgiveness, patience, hope, and charity !'

' Much was I pleased,' the grey-haired Wanderer
 said,

' When to those shining fields our notice first
 You turned ; and yet more pleased have from your
 lips

Gathered this fair report of them who dwell
 In that retirement ; whither, by such course
 Of evil hap and good as oft awaits
 A tired way-faring man, once *I* was brought
 While traversing alone yon mountain-pass.
 Dark on my road the autumnal evening fell,
 And night succeeded with unusual gloom,
 So hazardous that feet and hands became
 Guides better than mine eyes—until a light
 High in the gloom appeared, too high, methought, 740
 For human habitation ; but I longed
 To reach it, destitute of other hope.

I looked with steadiness as sailors look
 On the north star, or watch-tower's distant lamp,
 And saw the light—now fixed—and shifting *now*—
 Not like a dancing meteor, but in line
 Of never-varying motion, to and fro.
 It is no night-fire of the naked hills,
 Thought I—some friendly covert must be near.
 With this persuasion thitherward my steps 750
 I turn, and reach at last the guiding light ;
 Joy to myself ! but to the heart of her
 Who there was standing on the open hill,
 (The same kind Matron whom your tongue hath praised)
 Alarm and disappointment ! The alarm
 Ceased, when she learned through what mishap I
 came,

And by what help had gained those distant fields.
 Drawn from her cottage, on that æry height,
 Bearing a lantern in her hand she stood,
 Or paced the ground—to guide her Husband home, 760
 By that unwearied signal, kenned afar ;
 An anxious duty ! which the lofty site,
 Traversed but by a few irregular paths,
 Imposes, whensoever untoward chance
 Detains him after his accustomed hour
 Till night lies black upon the ground. “ But
 come,

Come,” said the Matron, “ to our poor abode ;
 Those dark rocks hide it ! ” Entering, I beheld
 A blazing fire—beside a cleanly hearth
 Sate down ; and to her office, with leave asked, 770
 The Dame returned.

Or ere that glowing pile
 Of mountain turf required the builder's hand
 Its wasted splendour to repair, the door

Opened, and she re-entered with glad looks,
 Her Helpmate following. Hospitable fare,
 Frank conversation, made the evening's treat :
 Need a bewildered traveller wish for more ?
 But more was given ; I studied as we sate
 By the bright fire, the good Man's form, and face
 Not less than beautiful ; an open brow
 Of undisturbed humanity ; a cheek
 Suffused with something of a feminine hue ;
 Eyes beaming courtesy and mild regard ;
 But, in the quicker turns of the discourse,
 Expression slowly varying, that evinced
 A tardy apprehension. From a fount
 Lost, thought I, in the obscurities of time,
 But honoured once, those features and that mien
 May have descended, though I see them here.
 In such a man, so gentle and subdued,
 Withal so graceful in his gentleness,
 A race illustrious for heroic deeds,
 Humbled, but not degraded, may expire.
 This pleasing fancy (cherished and upheld
 By sundry recollections of such fall
 From high to low, ascent from low to high,
 As books, record, and even the careless mind
 Cannot but notice among men and things)
 Went with me to the place of my repose.

780

790

‘ Roused by the crowing cock at dawn of day,
 I yet had risen too late to interchange
 A morning salutation with my Host,
 Gone forth already to the far-off seat
 Of his day's work. “ Three dark mid-winter months
 Pass,” said the Matron, “ and I never see,
 Save when the sabbath brings its kind release,
 My helpmate's face by light of day. He quits
 His door in darkness, nor till dusk returns.
 And, through Heaven's blessing, thus we gain the bread
 For which we pray ; and for the wants provide
 Of sickness, accident, and helpless age.
 Companions have I many ; many friends,
 Dependants, comforters—my wheel, my fire,
 All day the house-clock ticking in mine ear,
 The cackling hen, the tender chicken brood,
 And the wild birds that gather round my porch.
 This honest sheep-dog's countenance I read ;
 With him can talk ; nor blush to waste a word
 On creatures less intelligent and shrewd.

800

810

And if the blustering wind that drives the clouds 820
 Care not for me, he lingers round my door,
 And makes me pastime when our tempers suit ;—
 But, above all, my thoughts are my support,
 My comfort :—would that they were oftener fixed
 On what, for guidance in the way that leads
 To heaven, I know, by my Redeemer taught.”
 The Matron ended—nor could I forbear
 To exclaim—“ O happy ! yielding to the law
 Of these privations, richer in the main !—
 While thankless thousands are oppress and clogged 830
 By ease and leisure ; by the very wealth
 And pride of opportunity made poor ;
 While tens of thousands falter in their path,
 And sink, through utter want of cheering light ;
 For you the hours of labour do not flag ;
 For you each evening hath its shining star,
 And every sabbath-day its golden sun.”

‘ Yes ! ’ said the Solitary with a smile
 That seemed to break from an expanding heart,
 ‘ The untutored bird may found, and so construct, 840
 And with such soft materials line, her nest
 Fixed in the centre of a prickly brake,
 That the thorns wound her not ; they only guard.
 Powers not unjustly likened to those gifts
 Of happy instinct which the woodland bird
 Shares with her species, nature’s grace sometimes
 Upon the individual doth confer,
 Among her higher creatures born and trained
 To use of reason. And, I own that, tired
 Of the ostentatious world—a swelling stage 850
 With empty actions and vain passions stuffed,
 And from the private struggles of mankind
 Hoping far less than I could wish to hope,
 Far less than once I trusted and believed—
 I love to hear of those, who, not contending
 Nor summoned to contend for virtue’s prize,
 Miss not the humbler good at which they aim,
 Blest with a kindly faculty to blunt
 The edge of adverse circumstance, and turn
 Into their contraries the petty plagues 860
 And hindrances with which they stand beset,
 In early youth, among my native hills,
 I knew a Scottish Peasant who possessed
 A few small crofts of stone-encumbered ground ;
 Masses of every shape and size, that lay

Scattered about under the mouldering walls
 Of a rough precipice ; and some, apart,
 In quarters unobnoxious to such chance,
 As if the moon had showered them down in spite.
 But he repined not. Though the plough was scared 870
 By these obstructions, "round the shady stones
 A fertilising moisture," said the Swain,
 "Gathers, and is preserved ; and feeding dews
 And damps, through all the drougthy summer day
 From out their substance issuing, maintain
 Herbage that never fails : no grass springs up
 So green, so fresh, so plentiful, as mine !"
 But thinly sown these natures ; rare, at least,
 The mutual aptitude of seed and soil
 That yields such kindly product. He, whose bed 880
 Perhaps yon loose sods cover, the poor Pensioner
 Brought yesterday from our sequestered dell
 Here to lie down in lasting quiet, he,
 If living now, could otherwise report
 Of rustic loneliness : that grey-haired Orphan—
 So call him, for humanity to him
 No parent was—feelingly could have told,
 In life, in death, what solitude can breed
 Of selfishness, and cruelty, and vice ;
 Or, if it breed not, hath not power to cure. 890
 —But your compliance, Sir ! with our request
 My words too long have hindered.'

Undeterred,

Perhaps incited rather, by these shocks,
 In no ungracious opposition, given
 To the confiding spirit of his own
 Experienced faith, the reverend Pastor said,
 Around him looking ; 'Where shall I begin ?
 Who shall be first selected from my flock
 Gathered together in their peaceful fold ?'
 He paused—and having lifted up his eyes 900
 To the pure heaven, he cast them down again
 Upon the earth beneath his feet ; and spake :—

'To a mysteriously-united pair
 This place is consecrate ; to Death and Life,
 And to the best affections that proceed
 From their conjunction ; consecrate to faith
 In him who bled for man upon the cross ;
 Hallowed to revelation ; and no less
 To reason's mandates ; and the hopes divine
 Of pure imagination ;—above all,

To charity, and love, that have provided,
 Within these precincts, a capacious bed
 And receptacle, open to the good
 And evil, to the just and the unjust ;
 In which they find an equal resting-place :
 Even as the multitude of kindred brooks
 And streams, whose murmur fills this hollow vale,
 Whether their course be turbulent or smooth,
 Their waters clear or sullied, all are lost
 Within the bosom of yon crystal Lake,
 And end their journey in the same repose !

920

‘ And blest are they who sleep ; and we that know,
 While in a spot like this we breathe and walk,
 That all beneath us by the wings are covered
 Of motherly humanity, outspread
 And gathering all within their tender shade,
 Though loth and slow to come ! A battle-field,
 In stillness left when slaughter is no more,
 With this compared, makes a strange spectacle !
 A dismal prospect yields the wild shore strewn
 With wrecks, and trod by feet of young and old
 Wandering about in miserable search
 Of friends or kindred, whom the angry sea
 Restores not to their prayer ! Ah ! who would think
 That all the scattered subjects which compose
 Earth’s melancholy vision through the space
 Of all her climes—these wretched, these depraved,
 To virtue lost, insensible of peace,
 From the delights of charity cut off,
 To pity dead, the oppressor and the opprest ;
 Tyrants who utter the destroying word,
 And slaves who will consent to be destroyed—
 Were of one species with the sheltered few,
 Who, with a dutiful and tender hand,
 Lodged, in a dear appropriated spot,
 This file of infants ; some that never breathed
 The vital air ; others, which, though allowed
 That privilege, did yet expire too soon,
 Or with too brief a warning, to admit
 Administration of the holy rite
 That lovingly consigns the babe to the arms
 Of Jesus, and his everlasting care.
 These that in trembling hope are laid apart ;
 And the besprinkled nursling, unrequired
 Till he begins to smile upon the breast
 That feeds him ; and the tottering little-one

930

940

950

Taken from air and sunshine when the rose
 Of infancy first blooms upon his cheeks ;
 The thinking, thoughtless, school-boy ; the bold youth
 Of soul impetuous, and the bashful maid 960
 Smitten while all the promises of life
 Are opening round her ; those of middle age,
 Cast down while confident in strength they stand,
 Like pillars fixed more firmly, as might seem,
 And more secure, by very weight of all
 That, for support, rests on them ; the decayed
 And burthensome ; and lastly, that poor few
 Whose light of reason is with age extinct ;
 The hopeful and the hopeless, first and last,
 The earliest summoned and the longest spared— 970
 Are here deposited, with tribute paid
 Various, but unto each some tribute paid ;
 As if, amid these peaceful hills and groves,
 Society were touched with kind concern,
 And gentle " Nature grieved, that one should die ;"
 Or, if the change demanded no regret,
 Observed the liberating stroke—and blessed.

' And whence that tribute ? wherefore these regards ?
 Not from the naked *Heart* alone of Man
 (Though claiming high distinction upon earth 980
 As the sole spring and fountain-head of tears,
 His own peculiar utterance for distress
 Or gladness)—No,' the philosophic Priest
 Continued, ' 'tis not in the vital seat
 Of feeling to produce them, without aid
 From the pure soul, the soul sublime and pure ;
 With her two faculties of eye and ear,
 The one by which a creature, whom his sins
 Have rendered prone, can upward look to heaven ;
 The other that empowers him to perceive 990
 The voice of Deity, on height and plain,
 Whispering those truths in stillness, which the Word,
 To the four quarters of the winds, proclaims.
 Not without such assistance could the use
 Of these benign observances prevail :
 Thus are they born, thus fostered, thus maintained ;
 And by the care prospective of our wise
 Forefathers, who, to guard against the shocks,
 The fluctuation and decay of things,
 Embodied and established these high truths 1000
 In solemn institutions :—men convinced
 That life is love and immortality

The being one, and one the element.
 There lies the channel, and original bed,
 From the beginning, hollowed out and scooped
 For Man's affections—else betrayed and lost,
 And swallowed up 'mid deserts infinite!
 This is the genuine course, the aim, and end
 Of prescient reason; all conclusions else
 Are abject, vain, presumptuous, and perverse. 1010
 The faith partaking of those holy times,
 Life, I repeat, is energy of love
 Divine or human; exercised in pain,
 In strife, in tribulation; and ordained,
 If so approved and sanctified, to pass,
 Through shades and silent rest, to endless joy.'

BOOK SIXTH

THE CHURCHYARD AMONG THE MOUNTAINS

ARGUMENT

POET'S Address to the State and Church of England.—The Pastor not inferior to the ancient Worthies of the Church.—He begins his Narratives with an instance of unrequited Love.—Anguish of mind subdued, and how.—The lonely Miner.—An instance of perseverance.—Which leads by contrast to an example of abused talents, irresolution, and weakness.—Solitary, applying this covertly to his own case, asks for an instance of some Stranger, whose dispositions may have led him to end his days here.—Pastor, in answer, gives an account of the harmonising influence of Solitude upon two men of opposite principles, who had encountered agitations in public life.—The rule by which Peace may be obtained expressed, and where.—Solitary hints at an overpowering Fatality.—Answer of the Pastor.—What subjects he will exclude from his Narratives.—Conversation upon this.—Instance of an unamiable character, a Female, and why given.—Contrasted with this, a meek sufferer from unguarded and betrayed love.—Instance of heavier guilt, and its consequences to the Offender.—With this instance of a Marriage Contract broken is contrasted one of a Widower, evidencing his faithful affection towards his deceased Wife by his care of their female Children.

HAIL to the crown by Freedom shaped—to gird
 An English Sovereign's brow! and to the throne
 Whereon he sits! Whose deep foundations lie
 In veneration and the people's love;
 Whose steps are equity, whose seat is law.
 —Hail to the State of England! And conjoin
 With this a salutation as devout,

Made to the spiritual fabric of her Church ;
 Founded in truth ; by blood of Martyrdom
 Cemented ; by the hands of Wisdom reared 10
 In beauty of holiness, with ordered pomp,
 Decent and unreprieved. The voice, that greets
 The majesty of both, shall pray for both ;
 That, mutually protected and sustained,
 They may endure long as the sea surrounds
 This favoured Land, or sunshine warms her soil.

And O, ye swelling hills, and spacious plains !
 Besprent from shore to shore with steeple-towers,
 And spires whose ' silent finger points to heaven ' ;
 Nor wanting, at wide intervals, the bulk 20
 Of ancient minster lifted above the cloud
 Of the dense air, which town or city breeds
 To intercept the sun's glad beams—may ne'er
 That true succession fail of English hearts,
 Who, with ancestral feeling, can perceive
 What in those holy structures ye possess
 Of ornamental interest, and the charm
 Of pious sentiment diffused afar,
 And human charity, and social love.
 —Thus never shall the indignities of time 30
 Approach their reverend graces, unopposed ;
 Nor shall the elements be free to hurt
 Their fair proportions ; nor the blinder rage
 Of bigot zeal madly to overturn ;
 And, if the desolating hand of war
 Spare them, they shall continue to bestow,
 Upon the thronged abodes of busy men
 (Depraved, and ever prone to fill the mind
 Exclusively with transitory things)
 An air and mien of dignified pursuit ; 40
 Of sweet civility, on rustic wilds.

The Poet, fostering for his native land
 Such hope, entreats that servants may abound
 Of those pure altars worthy ; ministers
 Detached from pleasure, to the love of gain
 Superior, insusceptible of pride,
 And by ambitious longings undisturbed ;
 Men, whose delight is where their duty leads
 Or fixes them ; whose least distinguished day
 Shines with some portion of that heavenly lustre 50
 Which makes the sabbath lovely in the sight

Of blessèd angels, pitying human cares.
 —And, as on earth it is the doom of truth
 To be perpetually attacked by foes
 Open or covert, be that priesthood still,
 For her defence, replenished with a band
 Of strenuous champions, in scholastic arts
 Thoroughly disciplined ; nor (if in course
 Of the revolving world's disturbances
 Cause should recur, which righteous Heaven avert ! 60
 To meet such trial) from their spiritual sires
 Degenerate ; who, constrained to wield the sword
 Of disputation, shrunk not, though assailed
 With hostile din, and combating in sight
 Of angry umpires, partial and unjust ;
 And did, thereafter, bathe their hands in fire,
 So to declare the conscience satisfied :
 Nor for their bodies would accept release ;
 But, blessing God and praising him, bequeathed
 With their last breath, from out the smouldering
 flame, 70
 The faith which they by diligence had earned,
 Or, through illuminating grace, received,
 For their dear countrymen, and all mankind.
 O high example, constancy divine !

Even such a Man (inheriting the zeal
 And from the sanctity of elder times
 Not deviating,—a priest, the like of whom,
 If multiplied, and in their stations set,
 Would o'er the bosom of a joyful land
 Spread true religion and her genuine fruits) 80
 Before me stood that day ; on holy ground
 Fraught with the relics of mortality,
 Exalting tender themes, by just degrees
 To lofty raised ; and to the highest, last ;
 The head and mighty paramount of truths,—
 Immortal life, in never-fading worlds,
 For mortal creatures, conquered and secured.

That basis laid, those principles of faith
 Announced, as a preparatory act
 Of reverence done to the spirit of the place, 90
 The Pastor cast his eyes upon the ground ;
 Not, as before, like one oppressed with awe,
 But with a mild and social cheerfulness ;
 Then to the Solitary turned, and spake.

'At morn or eve, in your retired domain,
 Perchance you not unfrequently have marked
 A Visitor—in quest of herbs and flowers;
 Too delicate employ, as would appear,
 For one, who, though of drooping mien, had yet
 From nature's kindness received a frame
 Robust as ever rural labour bred.'

100

The Solitary answered: 'Such a Form
 Full well I recollect. We often crossed
 Each other's path; but, as the Intruder seemed
 Fondly to prize the silence which he kept,
 And I as willingly did cherish mine,
 We met, and passed, like shadows. I have heard,
 From my good Host, that being crazed in brain
 By unrequited love, he scaled the rocks,
 Dived into caves, and pierced the matted woods,
 In hope to find some virtuous herb of power
 To cure his malady!'

110

The Vicar smiled,—
 'Alas! before to-morrow's sun goes down
 His habitation will be here: for him
 That open grave is destined.'

'Died he then
 Of pain and grief?' the Solitary asked,
 'Do not believe it; never could that be!'

'He loved,' the Vicar answered, 'deeply loved,
 Loved fondly, truly, fervently; and dared
 At length to tell his love, but sued in vain;
 Rejected, yea repelled; and, if with scorn
 Upon the haughty maiden's brow, 'tis but
 A high-prized plume which female Beauty wears
 In wantonness of conquest, or puts on
 To cheat the world, or from herself to hide
 Humiliation, when no longer free.

120

That he could brook, and glory in;—but when
 The tidings came that she whom he had wooed
 Was wedded to another, and his heart
 Was forced to rend away its only hope;
 Then, Pity could have scarcely found on earth
 An object worthier of regard than he,
 In the transition of that bitter hour!
 Lost was she, lost; nor could the Sufferer say
 That in the act of preference he had been
 Unjustly dealt with; but the Maid was gone!

130

Had vanished from his prospects and desires ;
 Not by translation to the heavenly choir
 Who have put off their mortal spoils—ah no !
 She lives another's wishes to complete,— 140
 "Joy be their lot, and happiness," he cried,
 "His lot and hers, as misery must be mine !"

'Such was that strong concussion ; but the Man,
 Who trembled, trunk and limbs, like some huge
 oak

By a fierce tempest shaken, soon resumed
 The steadfast quiet natural to a mind
 Of composition gentle and sedate,
 And, in its movements, circumspect and slow.
 To books, and to the long-forsaken desk,
 O'er which enchained by science he had loved 150
 To bend, he stoutly re-addressed himself,
 Resolved to quell his pain, and search for truth
 With keener appetite (if that might be)
 And closer industry. Of what ensued
 Within the heart no outward sign appeared
 Till a betraying sickliness was seen
 To tinge his cheek ; and through his frame it crept
 With slow mutation unconcealable ;
 Such universal change as autumn makes
 In the fair body of a leafy grove 160
 Discoloured, then divested.

'Tis affirmed

By poets skilled in nature's secret ways
 That Love will not submit to be controlled
 By mastery :—and the good Man lacked not friends
 Who strove to instil this truth into his mind,
 A mind in all heart-mysteries unversed.
 "Go to the hills," said one, "remit a while
 This baneful diligence :—at early morn
 Court the fresh air, explore the heaths and woods ;
 And, leaving it to others to foretell, 170
 By calculations sage, the ebb and flow
 Of tides, and when the moon will be eclipsed,
 Do you, for your own benefit, construct
 A calendar of flowers, plucked as they blow
 Where health abides, and cheerfulness, and peace."
 The attempt was made ;—'tis needless to report
 How hopelessly ; but innocence is strong,
 And an entire simplicity of mind
 A thing most sacred in the eye of Heaven ;

That opens, for such sufferers, relief
 Within the soul, fountains of grace divine ;
 And doth commend their weakness and disease
 To Nature's care, assisted in her office
 By all the elements that round her wait
 To generate, to preserve, and to restore ;
 And by her beautiful array of forms
 Shedding sweet influence from above ; or pure
 Delight exhaling from the ground they tread.'

180

'Impute it not to impatience, if,' exclaimed
 The Wanderer, 'I infer that he was healed
 By perseverance in the course prescribed.'

190

'You do not err: the powers, that had been lost
 By slow degrees, were gradually regained ;
 The fluttering nerves composed ; the beating heart
 In rest established ; and the jarring thoughts
 To harmony restored.—But yon dark mould
 Will cover him, in the fulness of his strength,
 Hastily smitten by a fever's force ;
 Yet not with stroke so sudden as refused
 Time to look back with tenderness on her
 Whom he had loved in passion ; and to send
 Some farewell words—with one, but one, request ;
 That, from his dying hand, she would accept
 Of his possessions that which most he prized ;
 A book, upon whose leaves some chosen plants,
 By his own hand disposed with nicest care,
 In undecaying beauty were preserved ;
 Mute register, to him, of time and place,
 And various fluctuations in the breast ;
 To her, a monument of faithful love
 Conquered, and in tranquillity retained !

200

210

'Close to his destined habitation, lies
 One who achieved a humbler victory,
 Though marvellous in its kind. A place there is
 High in these mountains, that allured a band
 Of keen adventurers to unite their pains
 In search of precious ore : they tried, were foiled—
 And all desisted, all, save him alone.
 He, taking counsel of his own clear thoughts,
 And trusting only to his own weak hands,
 Urged unremittingly the stubborn work,
 Unseconded, uncoun tenanced ; then, as time
 Passed on, while still his lonely efforts found

220

No recompense, derided ; and at length,
 By many pitied, as insane of mind ;
 By others dreaded as the luckless thrall
 Of subterranean Spirits feeding hope
 By various mockery of sight and sound ;
 Hope after hope, encouraged and destroyed.
 —But when the lord of seasons had matured 230
 The fruits of earth through space of twice ten years,
 The mountain's entrails offered to his view
 And trembling grasp the long-deferred reward.
 Not with more transport did Columbus greet
 A world, his rich discovery ! But our Swain,
 A very hero till his point was gained,
 Proved all unable to support the weight
 Of prosperous fortune. On the fields he looked
 With an unsettled liberty of thought,
 Wishes and endless schemes ; by daylight walked 240
 Giddy and restless ; ever and anon
 Quaffed in his gratitude immoderate cups ;
 And truly might be said to die of joy !
 He vanished ; but conspicuous to this day
 The path remains that linked his cottage-door
 To the mine's mouth ; a long and slanting track,
 Upon the rugged mountain's stony side,
 Worn by his daily visits to and from
 The darksome centre of a constant hope.
 This vestige, neither force of beating rain, 250
 Nor the vicissitudes of frost and thaw
 Shall cause to fade, till ages pass away ;
 And it is named, in memory of the event,
 The PATH OF PERSEVERANCE.'

'Thou from whom
 Man has his strength,' exclaimed the Wanderer, 'oh !
 Do thou direct it ! To the virtuous grant
 The penetrative eye which can perceive
 In this blind world the guiding vein of hope ;
 That, like this Labourer, such may dig their way,
 "Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified" ; 260
 Grant to the wise *his* firmness of resolve !'

'That prayer were not superfluous,' said the Priest,
 'Amid the noblest relics, proudest dust,
 That Westminster, for Britain's glory, holds
 Within the bosom of her awful pile,
 Ambitiously collected. Yet the sigh,
 Which wafts that prayer to heaven, is due to all,
 Wherever laid, who living fell below

Their virtue's humbler mark ; a sigh of *pain*
 If to the opposite extreme they sank. 270
 How would you pity her who yonder rests ;
 Him, farther off ; the pair, who here are laid ;
 But, above all, that mixture of earth's mould
 Whom sight of this green hillock to my mind
 Recalls !

He lived not till his locks were nipped
 By seasonable frost of age ; nor died
 Before his temples, prematurely forced
 To mix the manly brown with silver grey,
 Gave obvious instance of the sad effect
 Produced, when thoughtless Folly hath usurped 280
 The natural crown that sage Experience wears.
 Gay, volatile, ingenious, quick to learn,
 And prompt to exhibit all that he possessed
 Or could perform ; a zealous actor, hired
 Into the troop of mirth, a soldier, sworn
 Into the lists of giddy enterprise—
 Such was he ; yet, as if within his frame
 Two several souls alternately had lodged,
 Two sets of manners could the Youth put on ;
 And, fraught with antics as the Indian bird 290
 That writhes and chatters in her wiry cage,
 Was graceful, when it pleased him, smooth and still
 As the mute swan that floats adown the stream,
 Or, on the waters of the unruffled lake,
 Anchors her placid beauty. Not a leaf,
 That flutters on the bough, lighter than he ;
 And not a flower, that droops in the green shade,
 More winningly reserved ! If ye enquire
 How such consummate elegance was bred
 Amid these wilds, this answer may suffice ; 300
 'Twas Nature's will ; who sometimes undertakes,
 For the reproof of human vanity,
 Art to outstrip in her peculiar walk.
 Hence, for this Favourite—lavishly endowed
 With personal gifts, and bright instinctive wit,
 While both, embellishing each other, stood
 Yet farther recommended by the charm
 Of fine demeanour, and by dance and song,
 And skill in letters—every fancy shaped
 Fair expectations ; nor, when to the world's 310
 Capacious field forth went the Adventurer, there
 Were he and his attainments overlooked,
 Or scantily rewarded ; but all hopes,

Cherished for him, he suffered to depart,
 Like blighted buds; or clouds that mimicked land
 Before the sailor's eye; or diamond drops
 That sparkling decked the morning grass; or aught
 That *was* attractive, and hath ceased to be!

' Yet, when this Prodigal returned, the rites
 Of joyful greeting were on him bestowed, 320
 Who, by humiliation undeterred,
 Sought for his weariness a place of rest
 Within his Father's gates.—Whence came he?—clothed
 In tattered garb, from hovels where abides
 Necessity, the stationary host
 Of vagrant poverty; from rifted barns
 Where no one dwells but the wide-staring owl
 And the owl's prey; from these bare haunts, to which
 He had descended from the proud saloon,
 He came, the ghost of beauty and of health, 330
 The wreck of gaiety! But soon revived
 In strength, in power refitted, he renewed
 His suit to Fortune; and she smiled again
 Upon a fickle Ingrate. Thrice he rose,
 Thrice sank as willingly. For he—whose nerves
 Were used to thrill with pleasure, while his voice
 Softly accompanied the tuneful harp,
 By the nice finger of fair ladies touched
 In glittering halls—was able to derive
 No less enjoyment from an abject choice. 340
 Who happier for the moment—who more blithe
 Than this fallen Spirit? in those dreary holds
 His talents lending to exalt the freaks
 Of merry-making beggars,—now, provoked
 To laughter multiplied in louder peals
 By his malicious wit; then, all enchained
 With mute astonishment, themselves to see
 In their own arts outdone, their fame eclipsed,
 As by the very presence of the Fiend
 Who dictates and inspires illusive feats, 350
 For knavish purposes! The city, too,
 (With shame I speak it) to her guilty bowers
 Allured him, sunk so low in self-respect
 As there to linger, there to eat his bread,
 Hired minstrel of voluptuous blandishment;
 Charming the air with skill of hand or voice,
 Listen who would, be wrought upon who might,
 Sincerely wretched hearts, or falsely gay.
 —Such the too frequent tenor of his boast

In ears that relished the report ;—but all 360
 Was from his Parents happily concealed ;
 Who saw enough for blame and pitying love.
 They also were permitted to receive
 His last, repentant breath ; and closed his eyes,
 No more to open on that irksome world
 Where he had long existed in the state
 Of a young fowl beneath one mother hatched,
 Though from another sprung, different in kind :
 Where he had lived, and could not cease to live,
 Distracted in propensity ; content 370
 With neither element of good or ill ;
 And yet in both rejoicing ; man unblest ;
 Of contradictions infinite the slave,
 Till his deliverance, when Mercy made him
 One with himself, and one with them that sleep.'

' 'Tis strange,' observed the Solitary, ' strange
 It seems, and scarcely less than pitiful,
 That in a land where charity provides
 For all that can no longer feed themselves,
 A man like this should choose to bring his shame 380
 To the parental door ; and with his sighs
 Infect the air which he had freely breathed
 In happy infancy. He could not pine
 Through lack of converse ; no—he must have found
 Abundant exercise for thought and speech,
 In his dividual being, self-reviewed,
 Self-catechised, self-punished.—Some there are
 Who, drawing near their final home, and much
 And daily longing that the same were reached,
 Would rather shun than seek the fellowship 390
 Of kindred mould.—Such haply here are laid ? '

' Yes,' said the Priest, ' the Genius of our hills—
 Who seems, by these stupendous barriers cast
 Round his domain, desirous not alone
 To keep his own, but also to exclude
 All other progeny—doth sometimes lure,
 Even by his studied depth of privacy,
 The unhappy alien hoping to obtain
 Concealment, or seduced by wish to find,
 In place from outward molestation free, 400
 Helps to internal ease. Of many such
 Could I discourse ; but as their stay was brief,
 So their departure only left behind
 Fancies, and loose conjectures. Other trace

Survives, for worthy mention, of a pair
 Who, from the pressure of their several fates,
 Meeting as strangers, in a petty town
 Whose blue roofs ornament a distant reach
 Of this far-winding vale, remained as friends
 True to their choice ; and gave their bones in trust 410
 To this loved cemetery, here to lodge
 With unescutcheoned privacy interred
 Far from the family vault.—A Chieftain one
 By right of birth ; within whose spotless breast
 The fire of ancient Caledonia burned :
 He, with the foremost whose impatience hailed
 The Stuart, landing to resume, by force
 Of arms, the crown which bigotry had lost,
 Aroused his clan ; and, fighting at their head,
 With his brave sword endeavoured to prevent 420
 Culloden's fatal overthrow. Escaped
 From that disastrous rout, to foreign shores
 He fled ; and when the lenient hand of time
 Those troubles had appeased, he sought and gained,
 For his obscured condition, an obscure
 Retreat, within this nook of English ground.

' The other, born in Britain's southern tract,
 Had fixed his milder loyalty, and placed
 His gentler sentiments of love and hate,
 There, where *they* placed them who in conscience prized
 The new succession, as a line of kings 431
 Whose oath had virtue to protect the land
 Against the dire assaults of papacy
 And arbitrary rule. But launch thy bark
 On the distempered flood of public life,
 And cause for most rare triumph will be thine
 If, spite of keenest eye and steadiest hand,
 The stream, that bears thee forward, prove not, soon
 Or late, a perilous master. He—who oft,
 Beneath the battlements and stately trees 440
 That round his mansion cast a sober gloom,
 Had moralised on this, and other truths
 Of kindred import, pleased and satisfied—
 Was forced to vent his wisdom with a sigh
 Heaved from the heart in fortune's bitterness,
 When he had crushed a plentiful estate
 By ruinous contest, to obtain a seat
 In Britain's senate. Fruitless was the attempt :
 And while the uproar of that desperate strife
 Continued yet to vibrate on his ear, 450

The vanquished Whig, under a borrowed name,
 (For the mere sound and echo of his own
 Haunted him with sensations of disgust
 That he was glad to lose) slunk from the world
 To the deep shade of those untravelled Wilds;
 In which the Scottish Laird had long possessed
 An undisturbed abode. Here, then, they met,
 Two doughty champions; flaming Jacobite
 And sullen Hanoverian! You might think
 That losses and vexations, less severe 460
 Than those which they had severally sustained,
 Would have inclined each to abate his zeal
 For his ungrateful cause; no,—I have heard
 My reverend Father tell that, 'mid the calm
 Of that small town encountering thus, they filled,
 Daily, its bowling-green with harmless strife;
 Plagued with uncharitable thoughts the church;
 And vexed the market-place. But in the breasts
 Of these opponents gradually was wrought,
 With little change of general sentiment, 470
 Such leaning towards each other, that their days
 By choice were spent in constant fellowship;
 And if, at times, they fretted with the yoke,
 Those very bickerings made them love it more.

'A favourite boundary to their lengthened walks:
 This Churchyard was. And, whether they had come
 Treading their path in sympathy and linked
 In social converse, or by some short space
 Discreetly parted to preserve the peace,
 One spirit seldom failed to extend its sway 480
 Over both minds, when they awhile had marked
 The visible quiet of this holy ground,
 And breathed its soothing air;—the spirit of hope
 And saintly magnanimity; that—spurning
 The field of selfish difference and dispute,
 And every care which transitory things,
 Earth and the kingdoms of the earth, create—
 Doth, by a rapture of forgetfulness,
 Preclude forgiveness, from the praise debarred,
 Which else the Christian virtue might have claimed.

'There live who yet remember here to have seen 491
 Their courtly figures, seated on the stump
 Of an old yew, their favourite resting-place,
 But as the remnant of the long-lived tree
 Was disappearing by a swift decay,

They, with joint care, determined to erect,
 Upon its site, a dial, that might stand
 For public use preserved, and thus survive
 As their own private monument: for this
 Was the particular spot, in which they wished 500
 (And Heaven was pleased to accomplish the desire)
 That, undivided, their remains should lie.
 So, where the mouldered tree had stood, was raised
 Yon structure, framing, with the ascent of steps
 That to the decorated pillar lead,
 A work of art more sumptuous than might seem
 To suit this place; yet built in no proud scorn
 Of rustic homeliness; they only aimed
 To ensure for it respectful guardianship.
 Around the margin of the plate, whereon 510
 The shadow falls to note the stealthy hours,
 Winds an inscriptive legend.—At these words
 Thither we turned; and gathered, as we read,
 The appropriate sense, in Latin numbers couched:
 ‘*Time flies; it is his melancholy task*
To bring, and bear away, delusive hopes,
And reproduce the troubles he destroys.
But, while his blindness thus is occupied,
Discerning Mortal! do thou serve the will
Of Time’s eternal Master, and that peace, 520
Which the world wants, shall be for thee confirmed!’

‘Smooth verse, inspired by no unlettered Muse,’
 Exclaimed the Sceptic, ‘and the strain of thought
 Accords with nature’s language;—the soft voice
 Of yon white torrent falling down the rocks
 Speaks, less distinctly, to the same effect.
 If, then, their blended influence be not lost
 Upon our hearts, not wholly lost, I grant,
 Even upon mine, the more are we required
 To feel for those among our fellow-men, 530
 Who, offering no obeisance to the world,
 Are yet made desperate by “too quick a sense
 Of constant infelicity,” cut off
 From peace like exiles on some barren rock,
 Their life’s appointed prison; not more free
 Than sentinels, between two armies, set,
 With nothing better, in the chill night air,
 Than their own thoughts to comfort them. Say why
 That ancient story of Prometheus chained
 To the bare rock, on frozen Caucasus; 540
 The vulture, the inexhaustible repast

Drawn from his vitals? Say what meant the woes
 By Tantalus entailed upon his race,
 And the dark sorrows of the line of Thebes?
 Fictions in form, but in their substance truths,
 Tremendous truths! familiar to the men
 Of long-past times, nor obsolete in ours.
 Exchange the shepherd's frock of native grey
 For robes with regal purple tinged; convert
 The crook into a sceptre; give the pomp 550
 Of circumstance; and here the tragic Muse
 Shall find apt subjects for her highest art.
 Amid the groves, under the shadowy hills,
 The generations are prepared; the pangs,
 The internal pangs, are ready; the dread strife
 Of poor humanity's afflicted will
 Struggling in vain with ruthless destiny.'

'Though,' said the Priest in answer, 'these be
 terms
 Which a divine philosophy rejects,
 We, whose established and unfailing trust 560
 Is in controlling Providence, admit
 That, through all stations, human life abounds
 With mysteries;—for, if Faith were left untried,
 How could the might, that lurks within her, then
 Be shown? her glorious excellence—that ranks
 Among the first of Powers and Virtues—proved?
 Our system is not fashioned to preclude
 That sympathy which you for others ask;
 And I could tell, not travelling for my theme
 Beyond these humble graves, of grievous crimes 570
 And strange disasters; but I pass them by,
 Loth to disturb what Heaven hath hushed in peace.
 —Still less, far less, am I inclined to treat
 Of Man degraded in his Maker's sight
 By the deformities of brutish vice:
 For, in such portraits, though a vulgar face
 And a coarse outside of repulsive life
 And unaffecting manners might at once
 Be recognised by all—' 'Ah! do not think,'
 The Wanderer somewhat eagerly exclaimed, 580
 'Wish could be ours that you, for such poor gain,
 (Gain shall I call it?—gain of what?—for whom?)
 Should breathe a word tending to violate
 Your own pure spirit. Not a step we look for
 In slight of that forbearance and reserve
 Which common human-heartedness inspires,

And mortal ignorance and frailty claim,
Upon this sacred ground, if nowhere else.'

'True,' said the Solitary, 'be it far
From us to infringe the laws of charity. 590
Let judgment here in mercy be pronounced ;
This, self-respecting Nature prompts, and this
Wisdom enjoins ; but if the thing we seek
Be genuine knowledge, bear we then in mind
How, from his lofty throne, the sun can fling
Colours as bright on exhalations bred
By weedy pool or pestilential swamp,
As by the rivulet sparkling where it runs,
Or the pellucid lake.'

'Small risk,' said I,
'Of such illusion do we here incur ; 600
Temptation here is none to exceed the truth ;
No evidence appears that they who rest
Within this ground, were covetous of praise,
Or of remembrance even, deserved or not.
Green is the churchyard, beautiful and green,
Ridge rising gently by the side of ridge,
A heaving surface, almost wholly free
From interruption of sepulchral stones,
And mantled o'er with aboriginal turf
And everlasting flowers. These Dalesmen trust 610
The lingering gleam of their departed lives
To oral record, and the silent heart ;
Depositories faithful and more kind
Than fondest epitaph : for, if those fail,
What boots the sculptured tomb ? And who can
blame,
Who rather would not envy, men that feel
This mutual confidence ; if, from such source,
The practice flow,—if thence, or from a deep
And general humility in death ?
Nor should I much condemn it, if it spring 620
From disregard of time's destructive power,
As only capable to prey on things
Of earth, and human nature's mortal part.

'Yet—in less simple districts, where we see
Stone lift its forehead emulous of stone
In courting notice ; and the ground all paved
With commendations of departed worth ;
Reading, where'er we turn, of innocent lives,
Of each domestic charity fulfilled,

And sufferings meekly borne—I, for my part, 630
 Though with the silence pleased that here prevails,
 Among those fair recitals also range,
 Soothed by the natural spirit which they breathe.
 And, in the centre of a world whose soil
 Is rank with all unkindness, compassed round
 With such memorials, I have sometimes felt,
 It was no momentary happiness
 To have *one* Enclosure where the voice that speaks
 In envy or detraction is not heard ;
 Which malice may not enter ; where the traces 640
 Of evil inclinations are unknown ;
 Where love and pity tenderly unite
 With resignation ; and no jarring tone
 Intrudes, the peaceful concert to disturb
 Of amity and gratitude.'

' Thus sanctioned,'
 The Pastor said, 'I willingly confine
 My narratives to subjects that excite
 Feelings with these accordant ; love, esteem,
 And admiration ; lifting up a veil,
 A sunbeam introducing among hearts 650
 Retired and covert ; so that ye shall have
 Clear images before your gladdened eyes
 Of nature's unambitious underwood,
 And flowers that prosper in the shade. And when
 I speak of such among my flock as swerved
 Or fell, those only shall be singled out
 Upon whose lapse, or error, something more
 Than brotherly forgiveness may attend ;
 To such will we restrict our notice, else
 Better my tongue were mute.

And yet there are, 660
 I feel, good reasons why we should not leave
 Wholly untraced a more forbidding way.
 For, strength to persevere and to support,
 And energy to conquer and repel—
 These elements of virtue, that declare
 The native grandeur of the human soul—
 Are oft-times not unprofitably shown
 In the perverseness of a selfish course :
 Truth every day exemplified, no less
 In the grey cottage by the murmuring stream 670
 Than in fantastic conqueror's roving camp,
 Or 'mid the factious senate unappalled
 Whoe'er may sink, or rise—to sink again,
 As merciless proscription ebbs and flows.

'There,' said the Vicar, pointing as he spake,
 'A woman rests in peace; surpassed by few
 In power of mind, and eloquent discourse.
 Tall was her stature; her complexion dark
 And saturnine; her head not raised to hold
 Converse with heaven, nor yet deprest towards earth,
 But in projection carried, as she walked 681
 For ever musing. Sunken were her eyes;
 Wrinkled and furrowed with habitual thought
 Was her broad forehead; like the brow of one
 Whose visual nerve shrinks from a painful glare
 Of overpowering light.—While yet a child,
 She, 'mid the humble flowerets of the vale,
 Towered like the imperial thistle, not unfurnished
 With its appropriate grace, yet rather seeking
 To be admired, than coveted and loved. 690
 Even at that age she ruled, a sovereign queen,
 Over her comrades; else their simple sports,
 Wanting all relish for her strenuous mind,
 Had crossed her only to be shunned with scorn.
 —Oh! pang of sorrowful regret for those
 Whom, in their youth, sweet study has enthralled,
 That they have lived for harsher servitude,
 Whether in soul, in body, or estate!
 Such doom was hers; yet nothing could subdue
 Her keen desire of knowledge, nor efface 700
 Those brighter images by books imprest
 Upon her memory, faithfully as stars
 That occupy their places, and, though oft
 Hidden by clouds, and oft bedimmed by haze,
 Are not to be extinguished, nor impaired.

'Two passions, both degenerate, for they both
 Began in honour, gradually obtained
 Rule over her, and vexed her daily life;
 An unremitting, avaricious thrift;
 And a strange thralldom of maternal love, 710
 That held her spirit, in its own despite,
 Bound—by vexation, and regret, and scorn,
 Constrained forgiveness, and relenting vows,
 And tears, in pride suppressed, in shame concealed—
 To a poor dissolute Son, her only child.
 —Her wedded days had opened with mishap,
 Whence dire dependence. What could she perform
 To shake the burthen off? Ah! there was felt,
 Indignantly, the weakness of her sex.
 She mused, resolved, adhered to her resolve; 720

The hand grew slack in alms-giving, the heart
 Closed by degrees to charity ; heaven's blessing
 Not seeking from that source, she placed her trust
 In ceaseless pains—and strictest parsimony
 Which sternly hoarded all that could be spared,
 From each day's need, out of each day's least gain.

‘ Thus all was re-established, and a pile
 Constructed, that sufficed for every end,
 Save the contentment of the builder's mind ;
 A mind by nature indisposed to aught 730
 So placid, so inactive, as content ;
 A mind intolerant of lasting peace,
 And cherishing the pang her heart deplored.
 Dread life of conflict ! which I oft compared
 To the agitation of a brook that runs
 Down a rocky mountain, buried now and lost
 In silent pools, now in strong eddies chained ;
 But never to be charmed to gentleness :
 Its best attainment fits of such repose
 As timid eyes might shrink from fathoming. 740

‘ A sudden illness seized her in the strength
 Of life's autumnal season.—Shall I tell
 How on her bed of death the Matron lay,
 To Providence submissive, so she thought ;
 But fretted, vexed, and wrought upon, almost
 To anger, by the malady that griped
 Her prostrate frame with unrelaxing power,
 As the fierce eagle fastens on the lamb ?
 She prayed, she moaned ;—her husband's sister watched 750
 Her dreary pillow, waited on her needs ;
 And yet the very sound of that kind foot
 Was anguish to her ears ! “ And must she rule,”
 This was the death-doomed Woman heard to say
 In bitterness, “ and must she rule and reign,
 Sole Mistress of this house, when I am gone ?
 Tend what I tended, calling it her own ! ”
 Enough ;—I fear, too much.—One vernal evening,
 While she was yet in prime of health and strength,
 I well remember, while I passed her door
 Alone, with loitering step, and upward eye 760
 Turned towards the planet Jupiter that hung
 Above the centre of the Vale, a voice
 Roused me, her voice ; it said, “ That glorious star
 In its untroubled element will shine
 As now it shines, when we are laid in earth

And safe from all our sorrows." With a sigh
 She spake, yet, I believe, not unsustained
 By faith in glory that shall far transcend
 Aught by these perishable heavens disclosed
 To sight or mind. Nor less than care divine 770
 Is divine mercy. She, who had rebelled,
 Was into meekness softened and subdued;
 Did, after trials not in vain prolonged,
 With resignation sink into the grave;
 And her uncharitable acts, I trust,
 And harsh unkindnesses are all forgiven,
 Tho', in this Vale, remembered with deep awe.'

The Vicar paused; and toward a seat advanced,
 A long stone-seat, fixed in the Churchyard wall;
 Part shaded by cool sycamore, and part 780
 Offering a sunny resting-place to them
 Who seek the House of worship, while the bells
 Yet ring with all their voices, or before
 The last hath ceased its solitary knoll.
 Beneath the shade we all sate down; and there
 His office, uninvited, he resumed.

'As, on a sunny bank, a tender lamb
 Lurks in safe shelter from the winds of March,
 Screened by its parent, so that little mound
 Lies guarded by its neighbour; the small heap 790
 Speaks for itself; an Infant there doth rest;
 The sheltering hillock is the Mother's grave.
 If mild discourse, and manners that conferred
 A natural dignity on humblest rank;
 If gladsome spirits, and benignant looks,
 That for a face not beautiful did more
 Than beauty for the fairest face can do;
 And if religious tenderness of heart,
 Grieving for sin, and penitential tears
 Shed when the clouds had gathered and distained 800
 The spotless ether of a maiden life;
 If these may make a hallowed spot of earth
 More holy in the sight of God or Man;
 Then, o'er that mould, a sanctity shall brood
 Till the stars sicken at the day of doom.

'Ah! what a warning for a thoughtless man,
 Could field or grove, could any spot of earth,
 Show to his eye an image of the pangs
 Which it hath witnessed; render back an echo

Of the sad steps by which it hath been trod ! 810
 There, by her innocent Baby's precious grave,
 And on the very turf that roofs her own,
 The Mother oft was seen to stand or kneel
 In the broad day, a weeping Magdalene.
 Now she is not ; the swelling turf reports
 Of the fresh shower, but of poor Ellen's tears
 Is silent ; nor is any vestige left
 Of the path worn by mournful tread of her
 Who, at her heart's light bidding, once had moved 820
 In virgin fearlessness, with step that seemed
 Caught from the pressure of elastic turf
 Upon the mountains gemmed with morning dew,
 In the prime hour of sweetest scents and airs.
 —Serious and thoughtful was her mind ; and yet,
 By reconcilment exquisite and rare,
 The form, port, motions, of this Cottage-girl
 Were such as might have quickened and inspired
 A Titian's hand, addrest to picture forth
 Oread or Dryad glancing through the shade
 What time the hunter's earliest horn is heard 830
 Startling the golden hills.

A wide-spread elm
 Stands in our valley, named THE JOYFUL TREE ;
 From dateless usage which our peasants hold
 Of giving welcome to the first of May
 By dances round its trunk.—And if the sky
 Permit, like honours, dance and song, are paid
 To the Twelfth Night, beneath the frosty stars
 Or the clear moon. The queen of these gay sports,
 If not in beauty yet in sprightly air,
 Was hapless Ellen.—No one touched the ground 840
 So deftly, and the nicest maiden's locks
 Less gracefully were braided ;—but this praise,
 Methinks, would better suit another place.

'She loved, and fondly deemed herself beloved.
 —The road is dim, the current unperceived,
 The weakness painful and most pitiful,
 By which a virtuous woman, in pure youth,
 May be delivered to distress and shame.
 Such fate was hers.—The last time Ellen danced,
 Among her equals, round THE JOYFUL TREE, 850
 She bore a secret burthen ; and full soon
 Was left to tremble for a breaking vow,—
 Then, to bewail a sternly-broken vow,
 Alone, within her widowed Mother's house.

It was the season of unfolding leaves,
 Of days advancing toward their utmost length,
 And small birds singing happily to mates
 Happy as they. With spirit-saddening power
 Winds pipe through fading woods; but those blithe
 notes

Strike the deserted to the heart; I speak 860
 Of what I know, and what we feel within.

—Beside the cottage in which Ellen dwelt
 Stands a tall ash-tree; to whose topmost twig
 A thrush resorts, and annually chants,
 At morn and evening from that naked perch,
 While all the undergrove is thick with leaves,
 A time-beguiling ditty, for delight
 Of his fond partner, silent in the nest.

—“Ah why,” said Ellen, sighing to herself,
 “Why do not words, and kiss, and solemn pledge; 870
 And nature that is kind in woman’s breast,
 And reason that in man is wise and good,
 And fear of him who is a righteous judge;
 Why do not these prevail for human life,
 To keep two hearts together, that began
 Their spring-time with one love, and that have need
 Of mutual pity and forgiveness, sweet
 To grant, or be received; while that poor bird—
 O come and hear him! Thou who hast to me
 Been faithless, hear him, though a lowly creature, 880
 One of God’s simple children that yet know not
 The universal Parent, how he sings
 As if he wished the firmament of heaven
 Should listen, and give back to him the voice
 Of his triumphant constancy and love;
 The proclamation that he makes, how far
 His darkness doth transcend our fickle light!”

‘Such was the tender passage, not by me
 Repeated without loss of simple phrase,
 Which I perused, even as the words had been 890
 Committed by forsaken Ellen’s hand
 To the blank margin of a Valentine,
 Bedropped with tears. ’Twill please you to be told
 That, studiously withdrawing from the eye
 Of all companionship, the Sufferer yet
 In lonely reading found a meek resource:
 How thankful for the warmth of summer days,
 When she could slip into the cottage-barn,
 And find a secret oratory there;

Or, in the garden, under friendly veil
 Of their long twilight, pore upon her book
 By the last lingering help of the open sky
 Until dark night dismissed her to her bed !
 Thus did a waking fancy sometimes lose
 The unconquerable pang of despised love.

900

‘ A kindlier passion opened on her soul
 When that poor Child was born. Upon its face
 She gazed as on a pure and spotless gift
 Of unexpected promise, where a grief
 Or dread was all that had been thought of,—joy 910
 Far livelier than bewildered traveller feels,
 Amid a perilous waste that all night long
 Hath harassed him toiling through fearful storm,
 When he beholds the first pale speck serene
 Of day-spring, in the gloomy east, revealed,
 And greets it with thanksgiving. “ Till this hour,”
 Thus, in her mother’s hearing, Ellen spake,
 “ There was a stony region in my heart ;
 But He, at whose command the parchèd rock
 Was smitten, and poured forth a quenching stream, 920
 Hath softened that obduracy, and made
 Unlooked-for gladness in the desert place,
 To save the perishing ; and, henceforth, I breathe
 The air with cheerful spirit, for thy sake,
 My Infant ! and for that good Mother dear,
 Who bore me ; and hath prayed for me in vain ;—
 Yet not in vain ; it shall not be in vain.”
 She spake, nor was the assurance unfulfilled ;
 And if heart-rending thoughts would oft return,
 They stayed not long.—The blameless Infant grew ;
 The Child whom Ellen and her Mother loved 931
 They soon were proud of ; tended it and nursed ;
 A soothing comforter, although forlorn ;
 Like a poor singing-bird from distant lands ;
 Or a choice shrub, which he, who passes by
 With vacant mind, not seldom may observe
 Fair-flowering in a thinly-peopled house,
 Whose window, somewhat sadly, it adorns.

‘ Through four months’ space the Infant drew its food
 From the maternal breast ; then scruples rose ; 940
 Thoughts, which the rich are free from, came and
 crossed

The fond affection. She no more could bear
 By her offence to lay a twofold weight

On a kind parent willing to forget
 Their slender means : so, to that parent's care
 Trusting her child, she left their common home,
 And undertook with dutiful content
 A Foster-mother's office.

'Tis, perchance,
 Unknown to you that in these simple vales
 The natural feeling of equality 950
 Is by domestic service unimpaired ;
 Yet, though such service be, with us, removed
 From sense of degradation, not the less
 The ungentle mind can easily find means
 To impose severe restraints and laws unjust,
 Which hapless Ellen now was doomed to feel :
 For (blinded by an over-anxious dread
 Of such excitement and divided thought
 As with her office would but ill accord)
 The pair whose infant she was bound to nurse, 960
 Forbad her all communion with her own :
 Week after week, the mandate they enforced.
 —So near ! yet not allowed upon that sight
 To fix her eyes—alas ! 'twas hard to bear !
 But worse affliction must be borne—far worse ;
 For 'tis Heaven's will—that, after a disease
 Begun and ended within three days' space,
 Her child should die ; as Ellen now exclaimed,
 Her own—deserted child !—Once, only once,
 She saw it in that mortal malady ; 970
 And, on the burial-day, could scarcely gain
 Permission to attend its obsequies.
 She reached the house, last of the funeral train ;
 And some one, as she entered, having chanced
 To urge unthinkingly their prompt departure,
 “ Nay,” said she, with commanding look, a spirit
 Of anger never seen in her before,
 “ Nay, ye must wait my time !” and down she sate,
 And by the unclosed coffin kept her seat
 Weeping and looking, looking on and weeping, 980
 Upon the last sweet slumber of her Child,
 Until at length her soul was satisfied.

‘ You see the Infant's Grave ; and to this spot,
 The Mother, oft as she was sent abroad,
 On whatsoever errand, urged her steps :
 Hither she came ; here stood, and sometimes knelt
 In the broad day, a rueful Magdalene !
 So call her ; for not only she bewailed

A mother's loss, but mourned in bitterness
 Her own transgression ; penitent sincere 990
 As ever raised to heaven a streaming eye !
 —At length the parents of the foster-child,
 Noting that in despite of their commands
 She still renewed and could not but renew
 Those visitations, ceased to send her forth ;
 Or to the garden's narrow bounds confined.
 I failed not to remind them that they erred ;
 For holy Nature might not thus be crossed,
 Thus wronged in woman's breast : in vain I pleaded—
 But the green stalk of Ellen's life was snapped, 1000
 And the flower drooped ; as every eye could see,
 It hung its head in mortal languishment.
 —Aided by this appearance, I at length
 Prevailed ; and, from those bonds released, she went
 Home to her mother's house.

The Youth was fled ;
 The rash betrayer could not face the shame
 Or sorrow which his senseless guilt had caused ;
 And little would his presence, or proof given
 Of a relenting soul, have now availed ;
 For, like a shadow, he was passed away 1010
 From Ellen's thoughts ; had perished to her mind
 For all concerns of fear, or hope, or love,
 Save only those which to their common shame,
 And to his moral being appertained :
 Hope from that quarter would, I know, have brought
 A heavenly comfort ; there she recognised
 An unrelaxing bond, a mutual need ;
 There, and, as seemed, there only.

She had built,
 Her fond maternal heart had built, a nest
 In blindness all too near the river's edge ; 1020
 That work a summer flood with hasty swell
 Had swept away ; and now her Spirit longed
 For its last flight to heaven's security.
 —The bodily frame wasted from day to day ;
 Meanwhile, relinquishing all other cares,
 Her mind she strictly tutored to find peace
 And pleasure in endurance. Much she thought,
 And much she read ; and brooded feelingly
 Upon her own unworthiness. To me,
 As to a spiritual comforter and friend, 1030
 Her heart she opened ; and no pains were spared
 To mitigate, as gently as I could,
 The sting of self-reproach, with healing words.

Meek Saint ! through patience glorified on earth !
 In whom, as by her lonely hearth she sate,
 The ghastly face of cold decay put on
 A sun-like beauty, and appeared divine !
 May I not mention—that, within those walls,
 In due observance of her pious wish,
 The congregation joined with me in prayer 1040
 For her soul's good ? Nor was that office vain.
 —Much did she suffer : but, if any friend,
 Beholding her condition, at the sight
 Gave way to words of pity or complaint,
 She stilled them with a prompt reproof, and said,
 “ He who afflicts me knows what I can bear ;
 And, when I fail, and can endure no more,
 Will mercifully take me to himself.”
 So, through the cloud of death, her Spirit passed
 Into that pure and unknown world of love 1050
 Where injury cannot come :—and here is laid
 The mortal Body by her Infant's side.'

The Vicar ceased ; and downcast looks made known
 That each had listened with his inmost heart.
 For me, the emotion scarcely was less strong
 Or less benign than that which I had felt
 When, seated near my venerable Friend,
 Under those shady elms, from him I heard
 The story that retraced the slow decline
 Of Margaret, sinking on the lonely heath 1060
 With the neglected house to which she clung.
 —I noted that the Solitary's cheek
 Confessed the power of nature.—Pleased though sad,
 More pleased than sad, the grey-haired Wanderer sate ;
 Thanks to his pure imaginative soul
 Capacious and serene ; his blameless life,
 His knowledge, wisdom, love of truth, and love
 Of human kind ! He was it who first broke
 The pensive silence, saying :—

‘ Blest are they
 Whose sorrow rather is to suffer wrong 1070
 Than to do wrong, albeit themselves have erred.
 This tale gives proof that Heaven most gently deals
 With such, in their affliction.—Ellen's fate,
 Her tender spirit, and her contrite heart,
 Call to my mind dark hints which I have heard
 Of one who died within this vale, by doom
 Heavier, as his offence was heavier far.
 Where, Sir, I pray you, where are laid the bones

Of Wilfred Armathwaite ?'

The Vicar answered,
 'In that green nook, close by the Churchyard wall, 1080
 Beneath yon hawthorn, planted by myself
 In memory and for warning, and in sign
 Of sweetness where dire anguish had been known,
 Of reconciliation after deep offence—
 There doth he rest. No theme his fate supplies
 For the smooth glozings of the indulgent world;
 Nor need the windings of his devious course
 Be here retraced;—enough that, by mishap
 And venial error, robbed of competence,
 And her obsequious shadow, peace of mind, 1090
 He craved a substitute in troubled joy;
 Against his conscience rose in arms, and, braving
 Divine displeasure, broke the marriage-vow.
 That which he had been weak enough to do
 Was misery in remembrance; he was stung,
 Stung by his inward thoughts, and by the smiles
 Of wife and children stung to agony.
 Wretched at home, he gained no peace abroad;
 Ranged through the mountains, slept upon the earth,
 Asked comfort of the open air, and found 1100
 No quiet in the darkness of the night,
 No pleasure in the beauty of the day.
 His flock he slighted: his paternal fields
 Became a clog to him, whose spirit wished
 To fly—but whither! And this gracious Church,
 That wears a look so full of peace and hope
 And love, benignant mother of the vale,
 How fair amid her brood of cottages!
 She was to him a sickness and reproach.
 Much to the last remained unknown: but this 1110
 Is sure, that through remorse and grief he died;
 Though pitied among men, absolved by God,
 He could not find forgiveness in himself;
 Nor could endure the weight of his own shame.

'Here rests a Mother. But from her I turn
 And from her grave.—Behold—upon that ridge,
 That, stretching boldly from the mountain side,
 Carries into the centre of the vale
 Its rocks and woods—the Cottage where she dwelt;
 And where yet dwells her faithful Partner, left 1120
 (Full eight years past) the solitary prop
 Of many helpless Children. I begin
 With words that might be prelude to a tale

Of sorrow and dejection ; but I feel
 No sadness, when I think of what mine eyes
 See daily in that happy family.
 —Bright garland form they for the pensive brow
 Of their undrooping Father's widowhood,
 Those six fair Daughters, budding yet—not one,
 Not one of all the band, a full-blown flower. 1130
 Deprest, and desolate of soul, as once
 That Father was, and filled with anxious fear,
 Now, by experience taught, he stands assured,
 That God, who takes away, yet takes not half
 Of what he seems to take ; or gives it back,
 Not to our prayer, but far beyond our prayer ;
 He gives it—the boon produce of a soil
 Which our endeavours have refused to till,
 And hope hath never watered. The Abode,
 Whose grateful owner can attest these truths, 1140
 Even were the object nearer to our sight,
 Would seem in no distinction to surpass
 The rudest habitations. Ye might think
 That it had sprung self-raised from earth, or grown
 Out of the living rock, to be adorned
 By nature only ; but, if thither led,
 Ye would discover, then, a studious work
 Of many fancies, prompting many hands.

‘ Brought from the woods the honeysuckle twines
 Around the porch, and seems, in that trim place, 1150
 A plant no longer wild ; the cultured rose
 There blossoms, strong in health, and will be soon
 Roof-high ; the wild pink crowns the garden-wall,
 And with the flowers are intermingled stones
 Sparry and bright, rough scatterings of the hills.
 These ornaments, that fade not with the year,
 A hardy Girl continues to provide ;
 Who, mounting fearlessly the rocky heights,
 Her Father's prompt attendant, does for him
 All that a boy could do, but with delight 1160
 More keen and prouder daring ; yet hath she,
 Within the garden, like the rest, a bed
 For her own flowers and favourite herbs, a space,
 By sacred charter, holden for her use.
 —These, and whatever else the garden bears
 Of fruit or flower, permission asked or not,
 I freely gather ; and my leisure draws
 A not unfrequent pastime from the hum
 Of bees around their range of sheltered hives

Busy in that enclosure ; while the rill, 1170
 That sparkling thrids the rocks, attunes his voice
 To the pure course of human life which there
 Flows on in solitude. But, when the gloom
 Of night is falling round my steps, then most
 This Dwelling charms me ; often I stop short,
 (Who could refrain ?) and feed by stealth my sight
 With prospect of the company within,
 Laid open through the blazing window :—there
 I see the eldest Daughter at her wheel
 Spinning amain, as if to overtake 1180
 The never-halting time ; or, in her turn,
 Teaching some Novice of the sisterhood
 That skill in this or other household work,
 Which, from her Father's honoured hand, herself,
 While she was yet a little-one, had learned.
 Mild Man ! he is not gay, but they are gay ;
 And the whole house seems filled with gaiety.
 —Thrice happy, then, the Mother may be deemed,
 The Wife, from whose consolatory grave
 I turned, that ye in mind might witness where, 1190
 And how, her Spirit yet survives on earth ! '

BOOK SEVENTH

THE CHURCHYARD AMONG THE MOUNTAINS

(*continued*)

ARGUMENT

IMPRESSION of these Narratives upon the Author's mind.—Pastor invited to give account of certain Graves that lie apart.—Clergyman and his Family.—Fortunate influence of change of situation.—Activity in extreme old age.—Another Clergyman, a character of resolute Virtue.—Lamentations over mis-directed applause.—Instance of less exalted excellence in a deaf man.—Elevated character of a blind man.—Reflection upon Blindness.—Interrupted by a Peasant who passes—his animal cheerfulness and careless vivacity.—He occasions a digression on the fall of beautiful and interesting Trees.—A female Infant's Grave.—Joy at her Birth.—Sorrow at her Departure.—A youthful Peasant—his patriotic enthusiasm and distinguished qualities—his untimely death.—Exultation of the Wanderer, as a patriot, in this Picture.—Solitary how affected.—Monument of a Knight.—Traditions concerning him.—Peroration of the Wanderer on the transitoriness of things and the revolutions of society.—Hints at his own past Calling.—Thanks the Pastor.

WHILE thus from theme to theme the Historian
 passed,
 The words he uttered, and the scene that lay
 Before our eyes, awakened in my mind
 Vivid remembrance of those long-past hours ;

When, in the hollow of some shadowy vale,
 (What time the splendour of the setting sun
 Lay beautiful on Snowdon's sovereign brow,
 On Cader Idris, or huge Penmanmaur)
 A wandering Youth, I listened with delight
 To pastoral melody or warlike air, 10
 Drawn from the chords of the ancient British harp
 By some accomplished Master, while he sate
 Amid the quiet of the green recess,
 And there did inexhaustibly dispense
 An interchange of soft or solemn tunes,
 Tender or blithe ; now, as the varying mood
 Of his own spirit urged,—now, as a voice
 From youth or maiden, or some honoured chief
 Of his compatriot villagers (that hung
 Around him, drinking in the impassioned notes 20
 Of the time-hallowed minstrelsy) required
 For their heart's ease or pleasure. Strains of power
 Were they, to seize and occupy the sense ;
 But to a higher mark than song can reach
 Rose this pure eloquence. And, when the stream
 Which overflowed the soul was passed away,
 A consciousness remained that it had left,
 Deposited upon the silent shore
 Of memory, images and precious thoughts,
 That shall not die, and cannot be destroyed. 30

'These grassy heaps lie amicably close,'
 Said I, 'like surges heaving in the wind
 Along the surface of a mountain pool :
 Whence comes it, then, that yonder we behold
 Five graves, and only five, that rise together
 Unsociably sequestered, and encroaching
 On the smooth play-ground of the village school ?'

The Vicar answered,—'No disdainful pride
 In them who rest beneath, nor any course
 Of strange or tragic accident, hath helped 40
 To place those hillocks in that lonely guise.
 —Once more look forth, and follow with your sight
 The length of road that from yon mountain's base
 Through bare enclosures stretches, 'till its line
 Is lost within a little tuft of trees ;
 Then, reappearing in a moment, quits
 The cultured fields ; and up the heathy waste,
 Mounts, as you see, in mazes serpentine,
 Led towards an easy outlet of the vale.

That little shady spot, that sylvan tuft,
 By which the road is hidden, also hides
 A cottage from our view; though I discern
 (Ye scarcely can) amid its sheltering trees
 The smokeless chimney-top.—

50

All unembowered

And naked stood that lowly Parsonage
 (For such in truth it is, and appertains
 To a small Chapel in the vale beyond)
 When hither came its last Inhabitant.
 Rough and forbidding were the choicest roads
 By which our northern wilds could then be crossed; 60
 And into most of these secluded vales
 Was no access for wain, heavy or light.
 So, at his dwelling-place the Priest arrived
 With store of household goods, in panniers slung
 On sturdy horses graced with jingling bells,
 And on the back of more ignoble beast;
 That, with like burthen of effects most prized
 Or easiest carried, closed the motley train.
 Young was I then, a school-boy of eight years;
 But still, methinks, I see them as they passed 70
 In order, drawing toward their wished-for home.
 —Rocked by the motion of a trusty ass
 Two ruddy children hung, a well-poised freight,
 Each in his basket nodding drowsily;
 Their bonnets, I remember, wreathed with flowers,
 Which told it was the pleasant month of June;
 And, close behind, the comely Matron rode,
 A woman of soft speech and gracious smile,
 And with a lady's mien.—From far they came,
 Even from Northumbrian hills; yet theirs had been 80
 A merry journey, rich in pastime, cheered
 By music, prank, and laughter-stirring jest;
 And freak put on, and arch word dropped—to swell
 The cloud of fancy and uncouth surmise
 That gathered round the slowly-moving train.
 —“Whence do they come? and with what errand
 charged?

Belong they to the fortune-telling tribe
 Who pitch their tents under the green-wood tree?
 Or Strollers are they, furnished to enact
 Fair Rosamond, and the Children of the Wood, 90
 And, by that whiskered tabby's aid, set forth
 The lucky venture of sage Whittington,
 When the next village hears the show announced
 By blast of trumpet?” Plenteous was the growth

Of such conjectures, overheard, or seen
 On many a staring countenance portrayed
 Of boor or burgher, as they marched along.
 And more than once their steadiness of face
 Was put to proof, and exercise supplied
 To their inventive humour, by stern looks, 100
 And questions in authoritative tone,
 From some staid guardian of the public peace,
 Checking the sober steed on which he rode,
 In his suspicious wisdom ; oftener still,
 By notice indirect, or blunt demand
 From traveller halting in his own despite,
 A simple curiosity to ease :
 Of which adventures, that beguiled and cheered
 Their grave migration, the good pair would tell,
 With undiminished glee, in hoary age. 110

‘ A Priest he was by function ; but his course
 From his youth up, and high as manhood’s noon,
 (The hour of life to which he then was brought)
 Had been irregular, I might say, wild ;
 By books unsteadied, by his pastoral care
 Too little checked. An active, ardent mind ;
 A fancy pregnant with resource and scheme
 To cheat the sadness of a rainy day ;
 Hands apt for all ingenious arts and games ;
 A generous spirit, and a body strong 120
 To cope with stoutest champions of the bowl ;
 Had earned for him sure welcome, and the rights
 Of a prized visitant, in the jolly hall
 Of country ’squire ; or at the statelier board
 Of duke or earl, from scenes of courtly pomp
 Withdrawn,—to while away the summer hours
 In condescension among rural guests.

‘ With these high comrades he had revelled long,
 Frolicked industriously, a simple Clerk
 By hopes of coming patronage beguiled 130
 Till the heart sickened. So, each loftier aim
 Abandoning and all his showy friends,
 For a life’s stay (slender it was, but sure)
 He turned to this secluded chapelry ;
 That had been offered to his doubtful choice
 By an unthought-of patron. Bleak and bare
 They found the cottage, their allotted home ;
 Naked without, and rude within ; a spot
 With which the Cure not long had been endowed :

And far remote the chapel stood,—remote, 140
 And, from his Dwelling, unapproachable,
 Save through a gap high in the hills, an opening
 Shadeless and shelterless, by driving showers
 Frequented, and beset with howling winds.
 Yet cause was none, whate'er regret might hang
 On his own mind, to quarrel with the choice
 Or the necessity that fixed him here ;
 Apart from old temptations, and constrained
 To punctual labour in his sacred charge.
 See him a constant preacher to the poor ! 150
 And visiting, though not with saintly zeal,
 Yet, when need was, with no reluctant will,
 The sick in body, or distress in mind ;
 And, by as salutary change, compelled
 To rise from timely sleep, and meet the day
 With no engagement, in his thoughts, more proud
 Or splendid than his garden could afford,
 His fields, or mountains by the heath-cock ranged,
 Or the wild brooks ; from which he now returned
 Contented to partake the quiet meal 160
 Of his own board, where sat his gentle Mate
 And three fair Children, plentifully fed
 Though simply, from their little household farm ;
 Nor wanted timely treat of fish or fowl
 By nature yielded to his practised hand ;—
 To help the small but certain comings-in
 Of that spare benefice. Yet not the less
 Theirs was a hospitable board, and theirs
 A charitable door.

So days and years
 Passed on ;—the inside of that rugged house 170
 Was trimmed and brightened by the Matron's care,
 And gradually enriched with things of price,
 Which might be lacked for use or ornament.
 What, though no soft and costly sofa there
 Insidiously stretched out its lazy length,
 And no vain mirror glittered upon the walls,
 Yet were the windows of the low abode
 By shutters weather-fenced, which at once
 Repelled the storm and deadened its loud roar.
 Their snow-white curtains hung in decent folds ; 180
 Tough moss, and long-enduring mountain-plants,
 That creep along the ground with sinuous trail,
 Were nicely braided ; and composed a work
 Like Indian mats, that with appropriate grace
 Lay at the threshold and the inner doors ;

And a fair carpet, woven of homespun wool
 But tintured daintily with florid hues,
 For seemliness and warmth, on festal days,
 Covered the smooth blue slabs of mountain-stone
 With which the parlour-floor, in simplest guise 190
 Of pastoral homesteads, had been long inlaid.

‘Those pleasing works the Housewife’s skill produced:
 Meanwhile the unsedentary Master’s hand
 Was busier with his task—to rid, to plant,
 To rear for food, for shelter, and delight;
 A thriving covert! And when wishes, formed
 In youth, and sanctioned by the riper mind,
 Restored me to my native valley, here
 To end my days; well pleased was I to see
 The once-bare cottage, on the mountain-side, 200
 Screen’d from assault of every bitter blast;
 While the dark shadows of the summer leaves
 Danced in the breeze, chequering its mossy roof.
 Time, which had thus afforded willing help
 To beautify with nature’s fairest growths
 This rustic tenement, had gently shed,
 Upon its Master’s frame, a wintry grace;
 The comeliness of unenfeebled age.

‘But how could I say, gently? for he still
 Retained a flashing eye, a burning palm, 210
 A stirring foot, a head which beat at nights
 Upon its pillow with a thousand schemes.
 Few likings had he dropped, few pleasures lost;
 Generous and charitable, prompt to serve;
 And still his harsher passions kept their hold—
 Anger and indignation. Still he loved
 The sound of titled names, and talked in glee
 Of long-past banquetings with high-born friends:
 Then, from those lulling fits of vain delight
 Uproused by recollected injury, railed 220
 At their false ways disdainfully,—and oft
 In bitterness, and with a threatening eye
 Of fire, incensed beneath its hoary brow.
 —Those transports, with staid looks of pure good-will,
 And with soft smile, his consort would reprove.
 She, far behind him in the race of years,
 Yet keeping her first mildness, was advanced
 Far nearer, in the habit of her soul,
 To that still region whither all are bound.
 Him might we liken to the setting sun 230

As seen not seldom on some gusty day,
 Struggling and bold, and shining from the west
 With an inconstant and unmellowed light;
 She was a soft attendant cloud, that hung
 As if with wish to veil the restless orb;
 From which it did itself imbibe a ray
 Of pleasing lustre.—But no more of this;
 I better love to sprinkle on the sod
 That now divides the pair, or rather say,
 That still unites them, praises, like heaven's dew, 240
 Without reserve descending upon both.

‘Our very first in eminence of years
 This old Man stood, the patriarch of the Vale!
 And, to his unmolested mansion, death
 Had never come, through space of forty years;
 Sparing both old and young in that abode.
 Suddenly then they disappeared: not twice
 Had summer scorched the fields; not twice had fallen,
 On those high peaks, the first autumnal snow,
 Before the greedy visiting was closed, 250
 And the long-privileged house left empty—swept
 As by a plague. Yet no rapacious plague
 Had been among them; all was gentle death,
 One after one, with intervals of peace.
 A happy consummation! an accord
 Sweet, perfect, to be wished for! save that here
 Was something which to mortal sense might sound
 Like harshness,—that the old grey-headed Sire,
 The oldest, he was taken last, survived
 When the meek Partner of his age, his Son, 260
 His Daughter, and that late and high-prized gift,
 His little smiling Grandchild, were no more.

“All gone, all vanished! he deprived and bare,
 How will he face the remnant of his life?
 What will become of him?” we said, and mused
 In sad conjectures—“Shall we meet him now
 Haunting with rod and line the craggy brooks?
 Or shall we overhear him, as we pass,
 Striving to entertain the lonely hours
 With music?” (for he had not ceased to touch 270
 The harp or viol which himself had framed,
 For their sweet purposes, with perfect skill.)
 “What titles will he keep? will he remain
 Musician, gardener, builder, mechanist,
 A planter, and a rearer from the seed?

A man of hope and forward-looking mind
 Even to the last!"—Such was he, unsubdued.
 But Heaven was gracious; yet a little while,
 And this Survivor, with his cheerful throng
 Of open projects, and his inward hoard 280
 Of unsunned griefs, too many and too keen,
 Was overcome by unexpected sleep,
 In one blest moment. Like a shadow thrown
 Softly and lightly from a passing cloud,
 Death fell upon him, while reclined he lay
 For noontide solace on the summer grass,
 The warm lap of his mother earth: and so,
 Their lenient term of separation past,
 That family (whose graves you there behold)
 By yet a higher privilege once more 290
 Were gathered to each other.'

Calm of mind

And silence waited on these closing words;
 Until the Wanderer (whether moved by fear
 Lest in those passages of life were some
 That might have touched the sick heart of his Friend
 Too nearly, or intent to reinforce
 His own firm spirit in degree deprest
 By tender sorrow for our mortal state)
 Thus silence broke:—"Behold a thoughtless Man
 From vice and premature decay preserved 300
 By useful habits, to a fitter soil
 Transplanted ere too late.—The hermit, lodged
 Amid the untrodden desert, tells his beads,
 With each repeating its allotted prayer,
 And thus divides and thus relieves the time;
 Smooth task, with *his* compared, whose mind could
 string,
 Not scantily, bright minutes on the thread
 Of keen domestic anguish; and beguile
 A solitude, unchosen, unprofessed;
 Till gentlest death released him.

Far from us 310

Be the desire—too curiously to ask
 How much of this is but the blind result
 Of cordial spirits and vital temperament,
 And what to higher powers is justly due.
 But you, Sir, know that in a neighbouring vale
 A Priest abides before whose life such doubts
 Fall to the ground; whose gifts of nature lie
 Retired from notice, lost in attributes
 Of reason, honourably effaced by debts

Which her poor treasure-house is content to owe, 320
 And conquests over her dominion gained,
 To which her frowardness must needs submit.
 In this one Man is shown a temperance—proof
 Against all trials; industry severe
 And constant as the motion of the day;
 Stern self-denial round him spread, with shade
 That might be deemed forbidding, did not there
 All generous feelings flourish and rejoice;
 Forbearance, charity in deed and thought,
 And resolution competent to take 330
 Out of the bosom of simplicity
 All that her holy customs recommend,
 And the best ages of the world prescribe.
 —Preaching, administering, in every work
 Of his sublime vocation, in the walks
 Of worldly intercourse between man and man,
 And, in his humble dwelling, he appears
 A labourer, with moral virtue girt,
 With spiritual graces, like a glory, crowned.'

'Doubt can be none,' the Pastor said, 'for whom 340
 This portraiture is sketched. The great, the good,
 The well-beloved, the fortunate, the wise,—
 These titles emperors and chiefs have borne,
 Honour assumed or given: and him, the WONDERFUL,
 Our simple shepherds, speaking from the heart,
 Deservedly have styled.—From his abode
 In a dependent chapelry that lies
 Behind yon hill, a poor and rugged wild,
 Which in his soul he lovingly embraced,
 And, having once espoused, would never quit; 350
 Into its graveyard will ere long be borne
 That lowly, great, good Man. A simple stone
 May cover him; and by its help, perchance,
 A century shall hear his name pronounced,
 With images attendant on the sound;
 Then, shall the slowly-gathering twilight close
 In utter night; and of his course remain
 No cognizable vestiges, no more
 Than of this breath, which shapes itself in words
 To speak of him, and instantly dissolves.' 360

The Pastor pressed by thoughts which round his
 theme
 Still linger'd, after a brief pause, resumed;
 'Noise is there not enough in doleful war,

But that the heaven-born poet must stand forth,
 And lend the echoes of his sacred shell,
 To multiply and aggravate the din?
 Pangs are there not enough in hopeless love—
 And, in requited passion, all too much
 Of turbulence, anxiety, and fear—
 But that the minstrel of the rural shade 370
 Must tune his pipe, insidiously to nurse
 The perturbation in the suffering breast,
 And propagate its kind, far as he may?
 —Ah who (and with such rapture as befits
 The hallowed theme) will rise and celebrate
 The good man's purposes and deeds; retrace
 His struggles, his discomfitures deplore,
 His triumphs hail, and glorify his end;
 That virtue, like the fumes and vapoury clouds
 Through fancy's heat redounding in the brain, 380
 And like the soft infections of the heart,
 By charm of measured words may spread o'er field,
 Hamlet, and town; and piety survive
 Upon the lips of men in hall or bower;
 Not for reproof, but high and warm delight,
 And grave encouragement, by song inspired?
 —Vain thought! but wherefore murmur or repine?
 The memory of the just survives in heaven:
 And, without sorrow, will the ground receive
 That venerable clay. Meanwhile the best 390
 Of what lies here confines us to degrees
 In excellence less difficult to reach,
 And milder worth: nor need we travel far
 From those to whom our last regards were paid,
 For such example.

Almost at the root
 Of that tall pine, the shadow of whose bare
 And slender stem, while here I sit at eve,
 Oft stretches toward me, like a long straight path
 Traced faintly in the greensward; there, beneath
 A plain blue stone, a gentle Dalesman lies, 400
 From whom, in early childhood, was withdrawn
 The precious gift of hearing. He grew up
 From year to year in loneliness of soul;
 And this deep mountain-valley was to him
 Soundless, with all its streams. The bird of dawn
 Did never rouse this Cottager from sleep
 With startling summons; not for his delight
 The vernal cuckoo shouted; not for him
 Murmured the labouring bee. When stormy winds

Were working the broad bosom of the lake 410
 Into a thousand thousand sparkling waves,
 Rocking the trees, or driving cloud on cloud
 Along the sharp edge of yon lofty crags,
 The agitated scene before his eye
 Was silent as a picture : evermore
 Were all things silent, wheresoe'er he moved.
 Yet, by the solace of his own pure thoughts
 Upheld, he duteously pursued the round
 Of rural labours ; the steep mountain-side
 Ascended, with his staff and faithful dog ; 420
 The plough he guided, and the scythe he swayed ;
 And the ripe corn before his sickle fell
 Among the jocund reapers. For himself,
 All watchful and industrious as he was,
 He wrought not : neither field nor flock he owned :
 No wish for wealth had place within his mind ;
 Nor husband's love, nor father's hope or care.

' Though born a younger brother, need was none
 That from the floor of his paternal home
 He should depart, to plant himself anew. 430
 And when, mature in manhood, he beheld
 His parents laid in earth, no loss ensued
 Of rights to him ; but he remained well pleased,
 By the pure bond of independent love,
 An inmate of a second family ;
 The fellow-labourer and friend of him
 To whom the small inheritance had fallen.
 —Nor deem that his mild presence was a weight
 That pressed upon his brother's house ; for books
 Were ready comrades whom he could not tire ; 440
 Of whose society the blameless Man
 Was never satiate. Their familiar voice,
 Even to old age, with unabated charm
 Beguiled his leisure hours ; refreshed his thoughts ;
 Beyond its natural elevation raised
 His introverted spirit ; and bestowed
 Upon his life an outward dignity
 Which all acknowledged. The dark winter night,
 The stormy day, each had its own resource ;
 Song of the muses, sage historic tale, 450
 Science severe, or word of holy Writ
 Announcing immortality and joy
 To the assembled spirits of just men
 Made perfect, and from injury secure.
 —Thus soothed at home, thus busy in the field,

To no perverse suspicion he gave way,
 No languor, peevishness, nor vain complaint :
 And they, who were about him, did not fail
 In reverence, or in courtesy ; they prized
 His gentle manners : and his peaceful smiles, 460
 The gleams of his slow-varying countenance,
 Were met with answering sympathy and love.

‘ At length, when sixty years and five were told,
 A slow disease insensibly consumed
 The powers of nature : and a few short steps
 Of friends and kindred bore him from his home
 (Yon cottage shaded by the woody crags)
 To the profounder stillness of the grave.
 —Nor was his funeral denied the grace
 Of many tears, virtuous and thoughtful grief ; 470
 Heart-sorrow rendered sweet by gratitude.
 And now that monumental stone preserves
 His name, and unambitiously relates
 How long, and by what kindly outward aids,
 And in what pure contentedness of mind,
 The sad privation was by him endured.
 —And yon tall pine-tree, whose composing sound
 Was wasted on the good Man’s living ear,
 Hath now its own peculiar sanctity ;
 And, at the touch of every wandering breeze, 480
 Murmurs, not idly, o’er his peaceful grave.

‘ Soul-cheering Light, most bountiful of things !
 Guide of our way, mysterious comforter !
 Whose sacred influence, spread through earth and
 heaven,
 We all too thanklessly participate,
 Thy gifts were utterly withheld from him
 Whose place of rest is near yon ivied porch.
 Yet, of the wild brooks ask if he complained ;
 Ask of the channelled rivers if they held
 A safer, easier, more determined, course. 490
 What terror doth it strike into the mind
 To think of one, blind and alone, advancing
 Straight toward some precipice’s airy brink !
 But, timely warned, *He* would have stayed his steps,
 Protected, say enlightened, by his ear ;
 And on the very edge of vacancy
 Not more endangered than a man whose eye
 Beholds the gulf beneath.—No floweret blooms

Throughout the lofty range of these rough hills,
 Nor in the woods, that could from him conceal 500
 Its birth-place ; none whose figure did not live
 Upon his touch. The bowels of the earth
 Enriched with knowledge his industrious mind ;
 The ocean paid him tribute from the stores
 Lodged in her bosom ; and, by science led,
 His genius mounted to the plains of heaven.
 —Methinks I see him—how his eye-balls rolled,
 Beneath his ample brow, in darkness paired,—
 But each instinct with spirit ; and the frame
 Of the whole countenance alive with thought, 510
 Fancy, and understanding ; while the voice
 Discoursed of natural or moral truth
 With eloquence, and such authentic power,
 That, in his presence, humbler knowledge stood
 Abashed, and tender pity overawed.’

‘ A noble—and, to unreflecting minds,
 A marvellous spectacle,’ the Wanderer said,
 ‘ Beings like these present ! But proof abounds
 Upon the earth that faculties, which seem 520
 Extinguished, do not, *therefore*, cease to be.
 And to the mind among her powers of sense
 This transfer is permitted,—not alone
 That the bereft their recompense may win ;
 But for remoter purposes of love
 And charity ; nor last nor least for this,
 That to the imagination may be given
 A type and shadow of an awful truth ;
 How, likewise, under sufferance divine,
 Darkness is banished from the realms of death,
 By man’s imperishable spirit, quelled. 530
 Unto the men who see not as we see
 Futurity was thought, in ancient times,
 To be laid open, and they prophesied.
 And know we not that from the blind have flowed
 The highest, holiest, raptures of the lyre ;
 And wisdom married to immortal verse ? ’

Among the humbler Worthies, at our feet
 Lying insensible to human praise,
 Love, or regret,—*whose* lineaments would next 540
 Have been portrayed, I guess not ; but it chanced
 That, near the quiet churchyard where we sate,
 A team of horses, with a ponderous freight
 Pressing behind, adown a rugged slope,

Whose sharp descent confounded their array,
Came at that moment, ringing noisily.

'Here,' said the Pastor, 'do we muse, and mourn
The waste of death; and lo! the giant oak
Stretched on his bier—that massy timber wain;
Nor fail to note the Man who guides the team.'

He was a peasant of the lowest class : 550
Grey locks profusely round his temples hung
In clustering curls, like ivy, which the bite
Of winter cannot thin; the fresh air lodged
Within his cheek, as light within a cloud;
And he returned our greeting with a smile.
When he had passed, the Solitary spake;
'A Man he seems of cheerful yesterdays
And confident to-morrows; with a face
Not worldly-minded, for it bears too much 560
Of Nature's impress,—gaiety and health,
Freedom and hope; but keen, withal, and shrewd.
His gestures note,—and hark! his tones of voice
Are all vivacious as his mien and looks.'

The Pastor answered, 'You have read him well.
Year after year is added to his store
With *silent* increase: summers, winters—past,
Past or to come; yea, boldly might I say,
Ten summers and ten winters of a space
That lies beyond life's ordinary bounds,
Upon his sprightly vigour cannot fix 570
The obligation of an anxious mind,
A pride in having, or a fear to lose;
Possessed like outskirts of some large domain,
By any one more thought of than by him
Who holds the land in fee, its careless lord!
Yet is the creature rational, endowed
With foresight; hears, too, every sabbath day,
The christian promise with attentive ear;
Nor will, I trust, the Majesty of Heaven
Reject the incense offered up by him, 580
Though of the kind which beasts and birds present
In grove or pasture; cheerfulness of soul,
From trepidation and repining free.
How many scrupulous worshippers fall down
Upon their knees, and daily homage pay
Less worthy, less religious even, than his!

'This qualified respect, the old Man's due,
 Is paid without reluctance; but in truth,'
 (Said the good Vicar with a fond half-smile)
 'I feel at times a motion of despite 590
 Towards one, whose bold contrivances and skill,
 As you have seen, bear such conspicuous part
 In works of havoc; taking from these vales,
 One after one, their proudest ornaments.
 Full oft his doings leave me to deplore
 Tall ash-tree, sown by winds, by vapours nursed,
 In the dry crannies of the pendent rocks;
 Light birch, aloft upon the horizon's edge,
 A veil of glory for the ascending moon;
 And oak whose roots by noontide dew were damped,
 And on whose forehead inaccessible 601
 The raven lodged in safety.—Many a ship
 Launched into Morecambe-bay, to *him* hath owed
 Her strong knee-timbers, and the mast that bears
 The loftiest of her pendants; He, from park
 Or forest, fetched the enormous axle-tree
 That whirls (how slow itself!) ten thousand spindles:
 And the vast engine labouring in the mine,
 Content with meaner prowess, must have lacked
 The trunk and body of its marvellous strength, 610
 If his undaunted enterprise had failed
 Among the mountain coves.

Yon household fir,
 A guardian planted to fence off the blast,
 But towering high the roof above, as if
 Its humble destination were forgot—
 That sycamore, which annually holds
 Within its shade, as in a stately tent
 On all sides open to the faning breeze,
 A grave assemblage, seated while they shear
 The fleece-encumbered flock—the JOYFUL ELM, 620
 Around whose trunk the maidens dance in May—
 And the LORD'S OAK — would plead their several
 rights

In vain, if he were master of their fate;
 His sentence to the axe would doom them all.
 But, green in age and lusty as he is,
 And promising to keep his hold on earth
 Less, as might seem, in rivalry with men
 Than with the forest's more enduring growth,
 His own appointed hour will come at last;
 And, like the haughty Spoilers of the world, 630
 This keen Destroyer, in his turn, must fall.

'Now from the living pass we once again :
 From Age,' the Priest continued, 'turn your thoughts ;
 From Age, that often unlamented drops ;
 And mark that daisied hillock, three spans long !
 —Seven lusty Sons sate daily round the board
 Of Gold-rill side ; and, when the hope had ceased
 Of other progeny, a Daughter then
 Was given, the crowning bounty of the whole ;
 And so acknowledged with a tremulous joy 640
 Felt to the centre of that heavenly calm
 With which by nature every mother's soul
 Is stricken in the moment when her throes
 Are ended, and her ears have heard the cry
 Which tells her that a living child is born ;
 And she lies conscious, in a blissful rest,
 That the dread storm is weathered by them both.

'The Father—him at this unlooked-for gift
 A bolder transport seizes. From the side
 Of his bright hearth, and from his open door, 650
 Day after day the gladness is diffused
 To all that come, almost to all that pass ;
 Invited, summoned, to partake the cheer
 Spread on the never-empty board, and drink
 Health and good wishes to his new-born girl,
 From cups replenished by his joyous hand.
 —Those seven fair brothers variously were moved
 Each by the thoughts best suited to his years :
 But most of all and with most thankful mind
 The hoary grandsire felt himself enriched ; 660
 A happiness that ebbed not, but remained
 To fill the total measure of his soul !
 —From the low tenement, his own abode,
 Whither, as to a little private cell,
 He had withdrawn from bustle, care, and noise,
 To spend the sabbath of old age in peace,
 Once every day he duteously repaired
 To rock the cradle of the slumbering babe :
 For in that female infant's name he heard
 The silent name of his departed wife ; 670
 Heart-stirring music ! hourly heard that name ;
 Full blest he was, "Another Margaret Green,"
 Oft did he say, "was come to Gold-rill side."

'Oh ! pang unthought of, as the precious boon
 Itself had been unlooked-for ; oh ! dire stroke
 Of desolating anguish for them all !

—Just as the Child could totter on the floor,
 And, by some friendly finger's help upstayed
 Ranged round the garden walk, while she perchance
 Was catching at some novelty of spring, 680
 Ground-flower, or glossy insect from its cell
 Drawn by the sunshine—at that hopeful season
 The winds of March, smiting insidiously,
 Raised in the tender passage of the throat
 Viewless obstruction; whence, all unforewarned,
 The household lost their pride and soul's delight.
 —But time hath power to soften all regrets,
 And prayer and thought can bring to worst distress
 Due resignation. Therefore, though some tears
 Fail not to spring from either Parent's eye 690
 Oft as they hear of sorrow like their own,
 Yet this departed Little-one, too long
 The innocent troubler of their quiet, sleeps
 In what may now be called a peaceful bed.

‘On a bright day—so calm and bright, it seemed
 To us, with our sad spirits, heavenly-fair—
 These mountains echoed to an unknown sound;
 A volley, thrice repeated o’er the Corse
 Let down into the hollow of that grave,
 Whose shelving sides are red with naked mould. 700
 Ye rains of April, duly wet this earth!
 Spare, burning sun of midsummer, these sods,
 That they may knit together, and therewith
 Our thoughts unite in kindred quietness!
 Nor so the Valley shall forget her loss.
 Dear Youth, by young and old alike beloved,
 To me as precious as my own!—Green herbs
 May creep (I wish that they would softly creep)
 Over thy last abode, and we may pass
 Reminded less imperiously of thee;— 710
 The ridge itself may sink into the breast
 Of earth, the great abyss, and be no more;
 Yet shall not thy remembrance leave our hearts,
 Thy image disappear!

The Mountain-ash
 No eye can overlook, when ’mid a grove
 Of yet unfaded trees she lifts her head
 Decked with autumnal berries, that outshine
 Spring's richest blossoms; and ye may have marked,
 By a brook-side or solitary tarn,
 How she her station doth adorn: the pool 720
 Glows at her feet, and all the gloomy rocks

Are brightened round her. In his native vale
 Such and so glorious did this Youth appear;
 A sight that kindled pleasure in all hearts
 By his ingenuous beauty, by the gleam
 Of his fair eyes, by his capacious brow,
 By all the graces with which nature's hand
 Had lavishly arrayed him. As old bards
 Tell in their idle songs of wandering gods,
 Pan or Apollo, veiled in human form : 730
 Yet, like the sweet-breathed violet of the shade,
 Discovered in their own despite to sense
 Of mortals (if such fables without blame
 May find chance-mention on this sacred ground)—
 So, through a simple rustic garb's disguise,
 And through the impediment of rural cares,
 In him revealed a scholar's genius shone;
 And so, not wholly hidden from men's sight,
 In him the spirit of a hero walked
 Our unpretending valley.—How the quoit 740
 Whizzed from the Stripling's arm! If touched by
 him,

The inglorious foot-ball mounted to the pitch
 Of the lark's flight,—or shaped a rainbow curve,
 Aloft, in prospect of the shouting field!
 The indefatigable fox had learned
 To dread his perseverance in the chase.
 With admiration would he lift his eyes
 To the wide-ruling eagle, and his hand
 Was loth to assault the majesty he loved :
 Else had the strongest fastnesses proved weak 750
 To guard the royal brood. The sailing glead,
 The wheeling swallow, and the darting snipe,
 The sportive sea-gull dancing with the waves,
 And cautious water-fowl, from distant climes,
 Fixed at their seat, the centre of the Mere,
 Were subject to young Oswald's steady aim,
 And lived by his forbearance.

From the coast
 Of France a boastful Tyrant hurled his threats;
 Our Country marked the preparation vast
 Of hostile forces; and she called—with voice 760
 That filled her plains, that reached her utmost shores,
 And in remotest vales was heard—to arms!
 —Then, for the first time, here you might have seen
 The shepherd's grey to martial scarlet changed,
 That flashed uncouthly through the woods and fields.
 Ten hardy Striplings, all in bright attire,

And graced with shining weapons, weekly marched,
 From this lone valley, to a central spot
 Where, in assemblage with the flower and choice
 Of the surrounding district, they might learn 770
 The rudiments of war ; ten—hardy, strong,
 And valiant ; but young Oswald, like a chief
 And yet a modest comrade, led them forth
 From their shy solitude, to face the world,
 With a gay confidence and seemly pride ;
 Measuring the soil beneath their happy feet
 Like Youths released from labour, and yet bound
 To most laborious service, though to them
 A festival of unencumbered ease ;
 The inner spirit keeping holiday, 780
 Like vernal ground to sabbath sunshine left.

‘ Oft have I marked him, at some leisure hour,
 Stretched on the grass, or seated in the shade,
 Among his fellows, while an ample map
 Before their eyes lay carefully outspread,
 From which the gallant teacher would discourse,
 Now pointing this way, and now that.—“ Here flows,”
 Thus would he say, “ the Rhine, that famous stream !
 Eastward, the Danube towards this inland sea,
 A mightier river, winds from realm to realm ; 790
 And, like a serpent, shows his glittering back
 Bespotted—with innumerable isles :
 Here reigns the Russian, there the Turk ; observe
 His capital city ! ” Thence, along a tract
 Of livelier interest to his hopes and fears,
 His finger moved, distinguishing the spots
 Where wide-spread conflict then most fiercely raged ;
 Nor left unstigmatized those fatal fields
 On which the sons of mighty Germany
 Were taught a base submission.—“ Here behold 800
 A nobler race, the Switzers, and their land,
 Vales deeper far than these of ours, huge woods,
 And mountains white with everlasting snow ! ”
 —And, surely, he, that spake with kindling brow,
 Was a true patriot, hopeful as the best
 Of that young peasantry, who, in our days,
 Have fought and perished for Helvetia’s rights—
 Ah, not in vain !—or those who, in old time,
 For work of happier issue, to the side
 Of Tell came trooping from a thousand huts, 810
 When he had risen alone ! No braver Youth
 Descended from Judean heights, to march

With righteous Joshua ; nor appeared in arms
 When grove was felled, and altar was cast down,
 And Gideon blew the trumpet, soul-inflamed,
 And strong in hatred of idolatry.'

The Pastor, even as if by these last words
 Raised from his seat within the chosen shade,
 Moved towards the grave ;—instinctively his steps
 We followed ; and my voice with joy exclaimed : 820
 ' Power to the Oppressors of the world is given,
 A might of which they dream not. Oh ! the curse,
 To be the awakener of divinest thoughts,
 Father and founder of exalted deeds ;
 And, to whole nations bound in servile straits,
 The liberal donor of capacities
 More than heroic ! this to be, nor yet
 Have sense of one connatural wish, nor yet
 Deserve the least return of human thanks ;
 Winning no recompense but deadly hate 830
 With pity mixed, astonishment with scorn !'

When this involuntary strain had ceased,
 The Pastor said : ' So Providence is served ;
 The forked weapon of the skies can send
 Illumination into deep, dark holds,
 Which the mild sunbeam hath not power to pierce.
 Ye Thrones that have defied remorse, and cast
 Pity away, soon shall ye quake with *fear* !
 For, not unconscious of the mighty debt
 Which to outrageous wrong the sufferer owes, 840
 Europe, through all her habitable bounds,
 Is thirsting for *their* overthrow, who yet
 Survive, as pagan temples stood of yore,
 By horror of their impious rites, preserved ;
 Are still permitted to extend their pride,
 Like cedars on the top of Lebanon
 Darkening the sun.

But less impatient thoughts,
 And love "all hoping and expecting all,"
 This hallowed grave demands, where rests in peace
 A humble champion of the better cause ; 850
 A Peasant-youth, so call him, for he asked
 No higher name ; in whom our country showed,
 As in a favourite son, most beautiful.
 In spite of vice, and misery, and disease,
 Spread with the spreading of her wealthy arts,
 England, the ancient and the free, appeared

In him to stand before my swimming eyes,
 Unconquerably virtuous and secure.
 —No more of this, lest I offend his dust :
 Short was his life, and a brief tale remains.

860

‘ One day—a summer’s day of annual pomp
 And solemn chase—from morn to sultry noon
 His steps had followed, fleetest of the fleet,
 The red-deer driven along its native heights
 With cry of hound and horn; and, from that toil
 Returned with sinews weakened and relaxed,
 This generous Youth, too negligent of self,
 Plunged—’mid a gay and busy throng convened
 To wash the fleeces of his Father’s flock—
 Into the chilling flood. Convulsions dire
 Seized him, that self-same night; and through the
 space

870

Of twelve ensuing days his frame was wrenched,
 Till nature rested from her work in death.
 To him, thus snatched away, his comrades paid
 A soldier’s honours. At his funeral hour
 Bright was the sun, the sky a cloudless blue—
 A golden lustre slept upon the hills;
 And if by chance a stranger, wandering there,
 From some commanding eminence had looked
 Down on this spot, well pleased would he have seen
 A glittering spectacle; but every face
 Was pallid: seldom hath that eye been moist
 With tears, that wept not then; nor were the few,
 Who from their dwellings came not forth to join
 In this sad service, less disturbed than we.
 They started at the tributary peal
 Of instantaneous thunder, which announced,
 Through the still air, the closing of the Grave;
 And distant mountains echoed with a sound
 Of lamentation, never heard before!’

881

890

The Pastor ceased.—My venerable Friend
 Victoriously upraised his clear bright eye;
 And, when that eulogy was ended, stood
 Enrapt, as if his inward sense perceived
 The prolongation of some still response,
 Sent by the ancient Soul of this wide land,
 The Spirit of its mountains and its seas,
 Its cities, temples, fields, its awful power,
 Its rights and virtues—by that Deity
 Descending, and supporting his pure heart

900

With patriotic confidence and joy.
 And, at the last of those memorial words,
 The pining Solitary turned aside ;
 Whether through manly instinct to conceal
 Tender emotions spreading from the heart
 To his worn cheek ; or with uneasy shame
 For those cold humours of habitual spleen
 That, fondly seeking in dispraise of man
 Solace and self-excuse, had sometimes urged
 To self-abuse a not ineloquent tongue. 910
 —Right toward the sacred Edifice his steps
 Had been directed ; and we saw him now
 Intent upon a monumental stone,
 Whose uncouth form was grafted on the wall,
 Or rather seemed to have grown into the side
 Of the rude pile ; as oft-times trunks of trees,
 Where nature works in wild and craggy spots,
 Are seen incorporate with the living rock—
 To endure for aye. The Vicar, taking note
 Of his employment, with a courteous smile 920
 Exclaimed—

‘The sagest Antiquarian’s eye
 That task would foil’ ; then, letting fall his voice
 While he advanced, thus spake : ‘Tradition tells
 That, in Eliza’s golden days, a Knight
 Came on a war-horse sumptuously attired,
 And fixed his home in this sequestered vale.
 ’Tis left untold if here he first drew breath,
 Or as a stranger reached this deep recess,
 Unknowing and unknown. A pleasing thought
 I sometimes entertain, that haply bound 930
 To Scotland’s court in service of his Queen,
 Or sent on mission to some northern Chief
 Of England’s realm, this vale he might have seen
 With transient observation ; and thence caught
 An image fair, which, brightening in his soul
 When joy of war and pride of chivalry
 Languished beneath accumulated years,
 Had power to draw him from the world, resolved
 To make that paradise his chosen home
 To which his peaceful fancies oft had turned. 940

‘Vague thoughts are these ; but, if belief may rest
 Upon unwritten story fondly traced
 From sire to son, in this obscure retreat
 The Knight arrived, with spear and shield, and borne
 Upon a Charger gorgeously bedecked

With broidered housings. And the lofty Steed—
 His sole companion, and his faithful friend,
 Whom he, in gratitude, let loose to range
 In fertile pastures—was beheld with eyes
 Of admiration and delightful awe, 950
 By those untravelled Dalesmen. With less pride,
 Yet free from touch of envious discontent,
 They saw a mansion at his bidding rise,
 Like a bright star, amid the lowly band
 Of their rude homesteads. Here the Warrior dwelt ;
 And, in that mansion, children of his own,
 Or kindred, gathered round him. As a tree
 That falls and disappears, the house is gone ;
 And, through improvidence or want of love
 For ancient worth and honourable things, 960
 The spear and shield are vanished, which the Knight
 Hung in his rustic hall. One ivied arch
 Myself have seen, a gateway, last remains
 Of that foundation in domestic care
 Raised by his hands. And now no trace is left
 Of the mild-hearted Champion, save this stone,
 Faithless memorial ! and his family name
 Borne by yon clustering cottages, that sprang
 From out the ruins of his stately lodge :
 These, and the name and title at full length,— 970
 Sir Alfred Erthing, with appropriate words
 Accompanied, still extant, in a wreath
 Or posy, girding round the several fronts
 Of three clear-sounding and harmonious bells,
 That in the steeple hang, his pious gift.'

'So fails, so languishes, grows dim, and dies,'
 The grey-haired Wanderer pensively exclaimed,
 'All that this world is proud of. From their spheres
 The stars of human glory are cast down ;
 Perish the roses and the flowers of kings, 980
 Princes, and emperors, and the crowns and palms
 Of all the mighty, withered and consumed !
 Nor is power given to lowliest innocence
 Long to protect her own. The man himself
 Departs ; and soon is spent the line of those
 Who, in the bodily image, in the mind,
 In heart or soul, in station or pursuit,
 Did most resemble him. Degrees and ranks,
 Fraternities and orders—heaping high
 New wealth upon the burthen of the old, 990
 And placing trust in privilege confirmed

And re-confirmed—are scoffed at with a smile
 Of greedy foretaste, from the secret stand
 Of Desolation, aimed : to slow decline
 These yield, and these to sudden overthrow :
 Their virtue, service, happiness, and state
 Expire ; and nature's pleasant robe of green,
 Humanity's appointed shroud, enwraps
 Their monuments and their memory. The vast Frame
 Of social nature changes evermore 1000
 Her organs and her members, with decay
 Restless, and restless generation, powers
 And functions dying and produced at need,—
 And by this law the mighty whole subsists :
 With an ascent and progress in the main ;
 Yet, oh ! how disproportioned to the hopes
 And expectations of self-flattering minds !

‘The courteous Knight, whose bones are here
 interred,
 Lived in an age conspicuous as our own
 For strife and ferment in the minds of men ; 1010
 Whence alteration in the forms of things,
 Various and vast. A memorable age !
 Which did to him assign a pensive lot—
 To linger 'mid the last of those bright clouds
 That, on the steady breeze of honour, sailed
 In long procession calm and beautiful.
 He who had seen his own bright order fade,
 And its devotion gradually decline,
 (While war, relinquishing the lance and shield,
 Her temper changed, and bowed to other laws) 1020
 Had also witnessed, in his morn of life,
 That violent commotion, which o'erthrew,
 In town and city and sequestered glen,
 Altar, and cross, and church of solemn roof,
 And old religious house—pile after pile ;
 And shook their tenants out into the fields,
 Like wild beasts without home ! Their hour was come ;
 But why no softening thought of gratitude,
 No just remembrance, scruple, or wise doubt ?
 Benevolence is mild ; nor borrows help, 1030
 Save at worst need, from bold impetuous force,
 Fitliest allied to anger and revenge.
 But Human-kind rejoices in the might
 Of mutability ; and airy hopes,
 Dancing around her, hinder and disturb
 Those meditations of the soul that feed

The retrospective virtues. Festive songs
 Break from the maddened nations at the sight
 Of sudden overthrow ; and cold neglect
 Is the sure consequence of slow decay.

1040

‘Even,’ said the Wanderer, ‘as that courteous
 Knight,

Bound by his vow to labour for redress
 Of all who suffer wrong, and to enact
 By sword and lance the law of gentleness,
 (If I may venture of myself to speak,
 Trusting that not incongruously I blend
 Low things with lofty) I too shall be doomed
 To outlive the kindly use and fair esteem
 Of the poor calling which my youth embraced
 With no unworthy prospect. But enough ;
 —Thoughts crowd upon me—and ’twere seemlier now
 To stop, and yield our gracious Teacher thanks
 For the pathetic records which his voice
 Hath here delivered ; words of heartfelt truth,
 Tending to patience when affliction strikes ;
 To hope and love ; to confident repose
 In God ; and reverence for the dust of Man.’

1050

BOOK EIGHTH

THE PARSONAGE

ARGUMENT

PASTOR'S apology and apprehensions that he might have detained his Auditors too long, with the Pastor's invitation to his house.—Solitary disinclined to comply—rallies the Wanderer—and playfully draws a comparison between his itinerant profession and that of the Knight-errant—which leads to Wanderer's giving an account of changes in the Country from the manufacturing spirit.—Favourable effects.—The other side of the picture, and chiefly as it has affected the humbler classes.—Wanderer asserts the hollowness of all national grandeur if unsupported by moral worth.—Physical science unable to support itself.—Lamentations over an excess of manufacturing industry among the humbler Classes of Society.—Picture of a Child employed in a Cotton-mill.—Ignorance and degradation of Children among the agricultural Population reviewed.—Conversation broken off by a renewed Invitation from the Pastor.—Path leading to his House.—Its appearance described.—His Daughter.—His Wife.—His Son (a Boy) enters with his Companion.—Their happy appearance.—The Wanderer how affected by the sight of them.

THE pensive Sceptic of the lonely vale
 To those acknowledgments subscribed his own.
 With a sedate compliance, which the Priest
 Failed not to notice, inly pleased, and said :—
 ‘If ye, by whom invited I began
 These narratives of calm and humble life,
 Be satisfied, ’tis well,—the end is gained ;
 And in return for sympathy bestowed
 And patient listening, thanks accept from me.
 —Life, death, eternity ! momentous themes 10
 Are they—and might demand a seraph’s tongue,
 Were they not equal to their own support ;
 And therefore no incompetence of mine
 Could do them wrong. The universal forms
 Of human nature, in a spot like this,
 Present themselves at once to all men’s view :
 Ye wished for act and circumstance, that make
 The individual known and understood ;
 And such as my best judgment could select
 From what the place afforded, have been given ; 20
 Though apprehensions crossed me that my zeal
 To his might well be likened, who unlocks
 A cabinet stored with gems and pictures—draws
 His treasures forth, soliciting regard
 To this, and this, as worthier than the last,
 Till the spectator, who awhile was pleased
 More than the exhibitor himself, becomes
 Weary and faint, and longs to be released.
 —But let us hence ! my dwelling is in sight,
 And there—’

At this the Solitary shrunk 30
 With backward will ; but, wanting not address
 That inward motion to disguise, he said
 To his Compatriot, smiling as he spake ;
 —‘The peaceable remains of this good Knight
 Would be disturbed, I fear, with wrathful scorn,
 If consciousness could reach him where he lies
 That one, albeit of these degenerate times,
 Deploring changes past, or dreading change
 Foreseen, had dared to couple, even in thought,
 The fine vocation of the sword and lance 40
 With the gross aims and body-bending toil
 Of a poor brotherhood who walk the earth
 Pitied, and, where they are not known, despised.

‘Yet, by the good Knight’s leave, the two estates
 Are graced with some resemblance. Errant those,

Exiles and wanderers—and the like are these ;
 Who, with their burthen, traverse hill and dale,
 Carrying relief for nature's simple wants.
 —What though no higher recompense be sought
 Than honest maintenance, by irksome toil 50
 Full oft procured, yet may they claim respect,
 Among the intelligent, for what this course
 Enables them to be and to perform.
 Their tardy steps give leisure to observe,
 While solitude permits the mind to feel ;
 Instructs, and prompts her to supply defects
 By the division of her inward self
 For grateful converse : and to these poor men
 Nature (I but repeat your favourite boast)
 Is bountiful—go wheresoe'er they may ; 60
 Kind nature's various wealth is all their own.
 Versed in the characters of men ; and bound,
 By ties of daily interest, to maintain
 Conciliatory manners and smooth speech ;
 Such have been, and still are in their degree,
 Examples efficacious to refine
 Rude intercourse ; apt agents to expel,
 By importation of unlooked-for arts,
 Barbarian torpor, and blind prejudice ;
 Raising, through just gradation, savage life 70
 To rustic, and the rustic to urbane.
 —Within their moving magazines is lodged
 Power that comes forth to quicken and exalt
 Affections seated in the mother's breast,
 And in the lover's fancy ; and to feed
 The sober sympathies of long-tried friends.
 —By these Itinerants, as experienced men,
 Counsel is given ; contention they appease
 With gentle language ; in remotest wilds,
 Tears wipe away, and pleasant tidings bring ; 80
 Could the proud quest of chivalry do more ?'

'Happy,' rejoined the Wanderer, 'they who gain
 A panegyric from your generous tongue !
 But, if to these Wayfarers once pertained
 Aught of romantic interest, it is gone.
 Their purer service, in this realm at least,
 Is past for ever.—An inventive Age
 Has wrought, if not with speed of magic, yet
 To most strange issues. I have lived to mark
 A new and unforeseen creation rise 90
 From out the labours of a peaceful Land

Wielding her potent enginery to frame
 And to produce, with appetite as keen
 As that of war, which rests not night or day,
 Industrious to destroy! With fruitless pains
 Might one like me *now* visit many a tract
 Which, in his youth, he trod, and trod again,
 A lone pedestrian with a scanty freight,
 Wished-for, or welcome, wheresoe'er he came--
 Among the tenantry of thorpe and vill; 100
 Or straggling burgh, of ancient charter proud,
 And dignified by battlements and towers
 Of some stern castle, mouldering on the brow
 Of a green hill or bank of rugged stream.
 The foot-path faintly marked, the horse-track wild,
 And formidable length of plashy lane,
 (Prized avenues ere others had been shaped
 Or easier links connecting place with place)
 Have vanished—swallowed up by stately roads
 Easy and bold, that penetrate the gloom 110
 Of Britain's farthest glens. The Earth has lent
 Her waters, Air her breezes; and the sail
 Of traffic glides with ceaseless intercourse,
 Glistening along the low and woody dale;
 Or, in its progress, on the lofty side
 Of some bare hill, with wonder kenned from far.

'Meanwhile, at social Industry's command,
 How quick, how vast an increase! From the germ
 Of some poor hamlet, rapidly produced
 Here a huge town, continuous and compact, 120
 Hiding the face of earth for leagues—and there,
 Where not a habitation stood before,
 Abodes of men irregularly massed
 Like trees in forests,—spread through spacious tracts,
 O'er which the smoke of unremitting fires
 Hangs permanent, and plentiful as wreaths
 Of vapour glittering in the morning sun.
 And, wheresoe'er the traveller turns his steps,
 He sees the barren wilderness erased,
 Or disappearing; triumph that proclaims 130
 How much the mild Directress of the plough
 Owes to alliance with these new-born arts!
 —Hence is the wide sea peopled,—hence the shores
 Of Britain are resorted to by ships
 Freightened from every climate of the world
 With the world's choicest produce. Hence that sum
 Of keels that rest within her crowded ports,

Or ride at anchor in her sounds and bays ;
 That animating spectacle of sails
 That, through her inland regions, to and fro 140
 Pass with the respirations of the tide,
 Perpetual, multitudinous ! Finally,
 Hence a dread arm of floating power, a voice
 Of thunder daunting those who would approach
 With hostile purposes the blessèd Isle,
 Truth's consecrated residence, the seat
 Impregnable of Liberty and Peace.

‘ And yet, O happy Pastor of a flock
 Faithfully watched, and, by that loving care
 And Heaven's good providence, preserved from taint !
 With you I grieve, when on the darker side 151
 Of this great change I look ; and there behold
 Such outrage done to nature as compels
 The indignant power to justify herself ;
 Yea, to avenge her violated rights,
 For England's bane.—When soothing darkness spreads
 O'er hill and vale,' the Wanderer thus expressed
 His recollections, ‘ and the punctual stars,
 While all things else are gathering to their homes,
 Advance, and in the firmament of heaven 160
 Glitter—but undisturbing, undisturbed ;
 As if their silent company were charged
 With peaceful admonitions for the heart
 Of all-beholding Man, earth's thoughtful lord ;
 Then, in full many a region, once like this
 The assured domain of calm simplicity
 And pensive quiet, an unnatural light
 Prepared for never-resting Labour's eyes
 Breaks from a many-windowed fabric huge ;
 And at the appointed hour a bell is heard, 170
 Of harsher import than the curfew-knoll
 That spake the Norman Conqueror's stern behest—
 A local summons to unceasing toil !
 Disgorged are now the ministers of day ;
 And, as they issue from the illumined pile,
 A fresh band meets them, at the crowded door—
 And in the courts—and where the rumbling stream,
 That turns the multitude of dizzy wheels,
 Glares, like a troubled spirit, in its bed
 Among the rocks below. Men, maidens, youths, 180
 Mother and little children, boys and girls,
 Enter, and each the wonted task resumes
 Within this temple, where is offered up

To Gain, the master-idol of the realm,
 Perpetual sacrifice. Even thus of old
 Our ancestors, within the still domain
 Of vast cathedral or conventual church,
 Their vigils kept; where tapers day and night
 On the dim altar burned continually,
 In token that the House was evermore
 Watching to God. Religious men were they;
 Nor would their reason, tutored to aspire
 Above this transitory world, allow
 That there should pass a moment of the year,
 When in their land the Almighty's service ceased.

190

'Triumph who will in these profaner rites
 Which we, a generation self-extolled,
 As zealously perform! I cannot share
 His proud complacency:—yet do I exult,
 Casting reserve away, exult to see
 An intellectual mastery exercised
 O'er the blind elements; a purpose given,
 A perseverance fed; almost a soul
 Imparted—to brute matter. I rejoice,
 Measuring the force of those gigantic powers
 That, by the thinking mind, have been compelled
 To serve the will of feeble-bodied Man.
 For with the sense of admiration blends
 The animating hope that time may come
 When, strengthened, yet not dazzled, by the might
 Of this dominion over nature gained,
 Men of all lands shall exercise the same
 In due proportion to their country's need;
 Learning, though late, that all true glory rests,
 All praise, all safety, and all happiness,
 Upon the moral law. Egyptian Thebes,
 Tyre, by the margin of the sounding waves,
 Palmyra, central in the desert, fell;
 And the Arts died by which they had been
 raised.

200

210

—Call Archimedes from his buried tomb
 Upon the grave of vanished Syracuse,
 And feelingly the Sage shall make report
 How insecure, how baseless in itself,
 Is the Philosophy whose sway depends
 On mere material instruments;—how weak
 Those arts, and high inventions, if unpropped
 By virtue.—He, sighing with pensive grief,
 Amid his calm abstractions, would admit

220

That not the slender privilege is theirs
To save themselves from blank forgetfulness !' 230

When from the Wanderer's lips these words had
fallen,

I said, ' And, did in truth those vaunted Arts
Possess such privilege, how could we escape
Sadness and keen regret, we who revere,
And would preserve as things above all price,
The old domestic morals of the land,
Her simple manners, and the stable worth
That dignified and cheered a low estate ?
Oh ! where is now the character of peace,
Sobriety, and order, and chaste love, 240
And honest dealing, and untainted speech,
And pure good-will, and hospitable cheer ;
That made the very thought of country-life
A thought of refuge, for a mind detained
Reluctantly amid the bustling crowd ?
Where now the beauty of the sabbath kept
With conscientious reverence, as a day
By the almighty Lawgiver pronounced
Holy and blest ? and where the winning grace
Of all the lighter ornaments attached 250
To time and season, as the year rolled round ? '

' Fled ! ' was the Wanderer's passionate response,
' Fled utterly ! or only to be traced
In a few fortunate retreats like this ;
Which I behold with trembling, when I think
What lamentable change, a year—a month—
May bring ; that brook converting as it runs
Into an instrument of deadly bane
For those, who, yet untempted to forsake
The simple occupations of their sires, 260
Drink the pure water of its innocent stream
With lip almost as pure.—Domestic bliss
(Or call it comfort, by a humbler name,)
How art thou blighted for the poor Man's heart !
Lo ! in such neighbourhood, from morn to eve,
The habitations empty ! or perchance
The Mother left alone,—no helping hand
To rock the cradle of her peevish babe ;
No daughters round her, busy at the wheel,
Or in dispatch of each day's little growth 270
Of household occupation ; no nice arts
Of needle-work ; no bustle at the fire,

Where once the dinner was prepared with pride ;
 Nothing to speed the day, or cheer the mind ;
 Nothing to praise, to teach, or to command !

‘The Father, if perchance he still retain
 His old employments, goes to field or wood,
 No longer led or followed by the Sons ;
 Idlers perchance they were,—but in *his* sight ; 280
 Breathing fresh air, and treading the green earth ;
 Till their short holiday of childhood ceased,
 Ne’er to return ! That birthright now is lost.
 Economists will tell you that the State
 Thrives by the forfeiture—unfeeling thought,
 And false as monstrous ! Can the mother thrive
 By the destruction of her innocent sons
 In whom a premature necessity
 Blocks out the forms of nature, preconsumes
 The reason, famishes the heart, shuts up
 The infant Being in itself, and makes 290
 Its very spring a season of decay !
 The lot is wretched, the condition sad,
 Whether a pining discontent survive,
 And thirst for change ; or habit hath subdued
 The soul depressed, dejected—even to love
 Of her close tasks, and long captivity.

‘Oh, banish far such wisdom as condemns
 A native Briton to these inward chains,
 Fixed in his soul, so early and so deep ;
 Without his own consent, or knowledge, fixed ! 300
 He is a slave to whom release comes not,
 And cannot come. The boy, where’er he turns,
 Is still a prisoner ; when the wind is up
 Among the clouds, and roars through the ancient
 woods ;
 Or when the sun is shining in the east,
 Quiet and calm. Behold him—in the school
 Of his attainments ? no ; but with the air
 Fanning his temples under heaven’s blue arch.
 His raiment, whitened o’er with cotton-flakes
 Or locks of wool, announces whence he comes. 310
 Creeping his gait and cowering, his lip pale,
 His respiration quick and audible ;
 And scarcely could you fancy that a gleam
 Could break from out those languid eyes, or a blush
 Mantle upon his cheek. Is this the form,

Is that the countenance, and such the port,
 Of no mean Being? One who should be clothed
 With dignity befitting his proud hope;
 Who, in his very childhood, should appear
 Sublime from present purity and joy!
 The limbs increase; but liberty of mind
 Is gone for ever; and this organic frame,
 So joyful in its motions, is become
 Dull, to the joy of her own motions dead;
 And even the touch, so exquisitely poured
 Through the whole body, with a languid will
 Performs its functions; rarely competent
 To impress a vivid feeling on the mind
 Of what there is delightful in the breeze,
 The gentle visitations of the sun,
 Or lapse of liquid element—by hand,
 Or foot, or lip, in summer's warmth—perceived.
 —Can hope look forward to a manhood raised
 On such foundations?’

320

330

‘Hope is none for him!’

The pale Recluse indignantly exclaimed,
 ‘And tens of thousands suffer wrong as deep.
 Yet be it asked, in justice to our age,
 If there were not, before those arts appeared,
 These structures rose, commingling old and young,
 And unripe sex with sex, for mutual taint;
 If there were not, *then*, in our far-famed Isle,
 Multitudes, who from infancy had breathed
 Air unimprisoned, and had lived at large;
 Yet walked beneath the sun, in human shape,
 As abject, as degraded? At this day,
 Who shall enumerate the crazy huts
 And tottering hovels, whence do issue forth
 A ragged Offspring, with their upright hair
 Crowned like the image of fantastic Fear;
 Or wearing, (shall we say?) in that white growth
 An ill-adjusted turban, for defence
 Or fierceness, wreathed around their sunburnt brows,
 By savage Nature? Shrivelled are their lips;
 Naked, and coloured like the soil, the feet
 On which they stand; as if thereby they drew
 Some nourishment, as trees do by their roots,
 From earth, the common mother of us all.
 Figure and mien, complexion and attire,
 Are leagued to strike dismay; but outstretched hand
 And whining voice denote them supplicants
 For the least boon that pity can bestow.

340

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360

Such on the breast of darksome heaths are found ;
 And with their parents occupy the skirts
 Of furze-clad commons ; such are born and reared
 At the mine's mouth under impending rocks ;
 Or dwell in chambers of some natural cave ;
 Or where their ancestors erected huts,
 For the convenience of unlawful gain,
 In forest purlieus ; and the like are bred,
 All England through, where nooks and slips of ground
 Purloined, in times less jealous than our own, 371
 From the green margin of the public way,
 A residence afford them, 'mid the bloom
 And gaiety of cultivated fields.
 Such (we will hope the lowest in the scale)
 Do I remember oftentimes to have seen
 'Mid Buxton's dreary heights. In earnest watch,
 Till the swift vehicle approach, they stand ;
 Then, following closely with the cloud of dust,
 An uncouth feat exhibit, and are gone 380
 Heels over head, like tumblers on a stage.
 Up from the ground they snatch the copper coin,
 And, on the freight of merry passengers
 Fixing a steady eye, maintain their speed ;
 And spin—and pant—and overhead again,
 Wild pursuivants ! until their breath is lost,
 Or bounty tires—and every face, that smiled
 Encouragement, hath ceased to look that way.
 —But, like the vagrants of the gipsy tribe,
 These, bred to little pleasure in themselves, 390
 Are profitless to others.

Turn we then
 To Britons born and bred within the pale
 Of civil polity, and early trained
 To earn, by wholesome labour in the field,
 The bread they eat. A sample should I give
 Of what this stock hath long produced to enrich
 The tender age of life, ye would exclaim,
 "Is this the whistling plough-boy whose shrill notes
 Impart new gladness to the morning air !"
 Forgive me if I venture to suspect 400
 That many, sweet to hear of in soft verse,
 Are of no finer frame. Stiff are his joints ;
 Beneath a cumbrous frock, that to the knees
 Invests the thriving churl, his legs appear,
 Fellows to those that lustily upheld
 The wooden stools for everlasting use,
 Whereon our fathers sate. And mark his brow !

Under whose shaggy canopy are set
 Two eyes—not dim, but of a healthy stare—
 Wide, sluggish, blank, and ignorant, and strange— 410
 Proclaiming boldly that they never drew
 A look or motion of intelligence
 From infant-conning of the Christ-cross-row,
 Or puzzling through a primer, line by line,
 Till perfect mastery crown the pains at last.
 —What kindly warmth from touch of fostering hand,
 What penetrating power of sun or breeze,
 Shall e'er dissolve the crust wherein his soul
 Sleeps, like a caterpillar sheathed in ice?
 This torpor is no pitiable work . . . 420
 Of modern ingenuity ; no town
 Nor crowded city can be taxed with aught
 Of sottish vice or desperate breach of law,
 To which (and who can tell where or how soon ?)
 He may be roused. This Boy the fields produce :
 His spade and hoe, mattock and glittering scythe,
 The carter's whip that on his shoulder rests
 In air high-towering with a boorish pomp,
 The sceptre of his sway ; his country's name,
 Her equal rights, her churches and her schools— 430
 What have they done for him ? And, let me ask,
 For tens of thousands uninformed as he ?
 In brief, what liberty of *mind* is here ?

This ardent sally pleased the mild good Man,
 To whom the appeal couched in its closing words
 Was pointedly addressed ; and to the thoughts
 That, in assent or opposition, rose
 Within his mind, he seemed prepared to give
 Prompt utterance ; but the Vicar interposed
 With invitation urgently renewed. 440
 —We followed, taking as he led, a path
 Along a hedge of hollies dark and tall,
 Whose flexible boughs low bending with a weight
 Of leafy spray, concealed the stems and roots
 That gave them nourishment. When frosty winds
 Howl from the north, what kindly warmth, methought,
 Is here—how grateful this impervious screen !
 —Not shaped by simple wearing of the foot
 On rural business passing to and fro
 Was the commodious walk : a careful hand 450
 Had marked the line, and strewn its surface o'er
 With pure cerulean gravel, from the heights
 Fetched by a neighbouring brook.—Across the vale

The stately fence accompanied our steps ;
 And thus the pathway, by perennial green
 Guarded and graced, seemed fashioned to unite,
 As by a beautiful yet solemn chain,
 The Pastor's mansion with the house of prayer.

Like image of solemnity, conjoined
 With feminine allurements soft and fair, 460
 The mansion's self displayed ;—a reverend pile
 With bold projections and recesses deep ;
 Shadowy, yet gay and lightsome as it stood
 Fronting the noontide sun. We paused to admire
 The pillared porch, elaborately embossed ;
 The low wide windows with their mullions old ;
 The cornice, richly fretted, of grey stone ;
 And that smooth slope from which the dwelling rose,
 By beds and banks Arcadian of gay flowers
 And flowering shrubs, protected and adorned : 470
 Profusion bright ! and every flower assuming
 A more than natural vividness of hue
 From unaffected contrast with the gloom
 Of sober cypress, and the darker foil
 Of yew, in which survived some traces, here
 Not unbecoming, of grotesque device
 And uncouth fancy. From behind the roof
 Rose the slim ash and massy sycamore,
 Blending their diverse foliage with the green
 Of ivy, flourishing and thick, that clasped 480
 The huge round chimneys, harbour of delight
 For wren and redbreast,—where they sit and sing
 Their slender ditties when the trees are bare.
 Nor must I leave untouched (the picture else
 Were incomplete) a relique of old times
 Happily spared, a little Gothic niche
 Of nicest workmanship ; that once had held
 The sculptured image of some patron-saint,
 Or of the blessed Virgin, looking down
 On all who entered those religious doors. 490

But lo ! where from the rocky garden-mount
 Crowned by its antique summer-house—descends,
 Light as the silver fawn, a radiant Girl ;
 For she hath recognised her honoured friend,
 The Wanderer ever welcome ! A prompt kiss
 The gladsome Child bestows at his request ;
 And, up the flowery lawn as we advance,
 Hangs on the old Man with a happy look,

And with a pretty restless hand of love.
 —We enter—by the Lady of the place 500
 Cordially greeted. Graceful was her port :
 A lofty stature undepressed by time,
 Whose visitation had not wholly spared
 The finer lineaments of form and face ;
 To that complexion brought which prudence trusts in
 And wisdom loves.—But when a stately ship
 Sails in smooth weather by the placid coast
 On homeward voyage, what—if wind and wave,
 And hardship undergone in various climes,
 Have caused her to abate the virgin pride, 510
 And that full trim of inexperienced hope
 With which she left her haven—not for this,
 Should the sun strike her, and the impartial breeze
 Play on her streamers, fails she to assume
 Brightness and touching beauty of her own,
 That charm all eyes. So bright, so fair, appeared
 This goodly Matron, shining in the beams
 Of unexpected pleasure.—Soon the board
 Was spread, and we partook a plain repast.

Here, resting in cool shelter, we beguiled 520
 The mid-day hours with desultory talk ;
 From trivial themes to general argument
 Passing, as accident or fancy led,
 Or courtesy prescribed. While question rose
 And answer flowed, the fetters of reserve
 Dropping from every mind, the Solitary
 Resumed the manners of his happier days ;
 And in the various conversation bore
 A willing, nay, at times, a forward part ;
 Yet with the grace of one who in the world 530
 Had learned the art of pleasing, and had now
 Occasion given him to display his skill,
 Upon the steadfast 'vantage-ground of truth.
 He gazed, with admiration unsuppressed,
 Upon the landscape of the sun-bright vale,
 Seen, from the shady room in which we sate,
 In softened perspective ; and more than once
 Praised the consummate harmony serene
 Of gravity and elegance, diffused
 Around the mansion and its whole domain ; 540
 Not, doubtless, without help of female taste
 And female care.—‘ A blessed lot is yours !’
 The words escaped his lip, with a tender sigh
 Breathed over them : but suddenly the door

Flew open, and a pair of lusty Boys
 Appeared, confusion checking their delight.
 —Not brothers they in feature or attire,
 But fond companions, so I guessed, in field,
 And by the river's margin—whence they come,
 Keen anglers with unusual spoil elated. 550
 One bears a willow-pannier on his back,
 The boy of plainer garb, whose blush survives
 More deeply tinged. Twin might the other be
 To that fair girl who from the garden-mount
 Bounded:—triumphant entry this for him!
 Between his hands he holds a smooth blue stone,
 On whose capacious surface see outspread
 Large store of gleaming crimson-spotted trouts;
 Ranged side by side, and lessening by degrees
 Up to the dwarf that tops the pinnacle. 560
 Upon the board he lays the sky-blue stone
 With its rich freight; their number he proclaims;
 Tells from what pool the noblest had been dragged;
 And where the very monarch of the brook,
 After long struggle, had escaped at last—
 Stealing alternately at them and us
 (As doth his comrade too) a look of pride;
 And, verily, the silent creatures made
 A splendid sight, together thus exposed;
 Dead—but not sullied or deformed by death, 570
 That seemed to pity what he could not spare.

But O, the animation in the mien
 Of those two boys! yea in the very words
 With which the young narrator was inspired,
 When, as our questions led, he told at large
 Of that day's prowess! Him might I compare,
 His looks, tones, gestures, eager eloquence,
 To a bold brook that splits for better speed,
 And at the self-same moment, works its way
 Through many channels, ever and anon 580
 Parted and re-united: his compeer
 To the still lake, whose stillness is to sight
 As beautiful—as grateful to the mind.
 —But to what object shall the lovely Girl
 Be likened? She whose countenance and air
 Unite the graceful qualities of both,
 Even as she shares the pride and joy of both.

My grey-haired Friend was moved; his vivid eye
 Glistened with tenderness; his mind, I knew,

Was full ; and had, I doubted not, returned, 590
 Upon this impulse, to the theme—erewhile
 Abruptly broken off. The ruddy boys
 Withdrew, on summons to their well-earned meal ;
 And He—to whom all tongues resigned their rights
 With willingness, to whom the general ear
 Listened with readier patience than to strain
 Of music, lute or harp, a long delight
 That ceased not when his voice had ceased—as One
 Who from truth's central point serenely views
 The compass of his argument—began 600
 Mildly, and with a clear and steady tone.

BOOK NINTH

DISCOURSE OF THE WANDERER, AND AN EVENING VISIT TO THE LAKE

ARGUMENT

WANDERER asserts that an active principle pervades the Universe, its noblest seat the human soul.—How lively this principle is in Childhood.—Hence the delight in old Age of looking back upon Childhood.—The dignity, powers, and privileges of Age asserted.—These not to be looked for generally but under a just government.—Right of a human Creature to be exempt from being considered as a mere Instrument.—The condition of multitudes deplored.—Former conversation recurred to, and the Wanderer's opinions set in a clearer light.—Truth placed within reach of the humblest.—Equality.—Happy state of the two Boys again adverted to.—Earnest wish expressed for a System of National Education established universally by Government.—Glorious effects of this foretold.—Walk to the Lake.—Grand spectacle from the side of a hill.—Address of Priest to the Supreme Being—in the course of which he contrasts with ancient Barbarism the present appearance of the scene before him.—The change ascribed to Christianity.—Apostrophe to his flock, living and dead.—Gratitude to the Almighty.—Return over the Lake.—Parting with the Solitary.—Under what circumstances.

‘ **T** every Form of being is assigned,’
 Thus calmly spake the venerable Sage,
 ‘ An *active* Principle :—howe’er removed
 From sense and observation, it subsists
 In all things, in all natures ; in the stars
 Of azure heaven, the unenduring clouds,
 In flower and tree, in every pebbly stone
 That paves the brooks, the stationary rocks,
 The moving waters, and the invisible air.
 Whate’er exists hath properties that spread
 Beyond itself, communicating good,
 A simple blessing, or with evil mixed ;

Spirit that knows no insulated spot,
 No chasm, no solitude ; from link to link
 It circulates, the Soul of all the worlds.
 This is the freedom of the universe ;
 Unfolded still the more, more visible,
 The more we know ; and yet is revered least,
 And least respected in the human Mind,
 Its most apparent home. The food of hope 20
 Is meditated action ; robbed of this
 Her sole support, she languishes and dies.
 We perish also ; for we live by hope
 And by desire ; we see by the glad light
 And breathe the sweet air of futurity ;
 And so we live, or else we have no life.
 To-morrow—nay perchance this very hour
 (For every moment hath its own to-morrow !)
 Those blooming Boys, whose hearts are almost sick
 With present triumph, will be sure to find 30
 A field before them freshened with the dew
 Of other expectations ;—in which course
 Their happy year spins round. The youth obeys
 A like glad impulse ; and so moves the man
 'Mid all his apprehensions, cares, and fears,—
 Or so he ought to move. Ah ! why in age
 Do we revert so fondly to the walks
 Of childhood—but that there the Soul discerns
 The dear memorial footsteps unimpaired
 Of her own native vigour ; thence can hear 40
 Reverberations ; and a choral song,
 Commingling with the incense that ascends,
 Undaunted, toward the imperishable heavens,
 From her own lonely altar ?

Do not think
 That good and wise ever will be allowed,
 Though strength decay, to breathe in such estate
 As shall divide them wholly from the stir
 Of hopeful nature. Rightly it is said
 That Man descends into the VALE of years ;
 Yet have I thought that we might also speak, 50
 And not presumptuously, I trust, of Age,
 As of a final EMINENCE ; though bare
 In aspect and forbidding, yet a point
 On which 'tis not impossible to sit
 In awful sovereignty ; a place of power,
 A throne, that may be likened unto his,
 Who, in some placid day of summer, looks
 Down from a mountain-top,—say one of those

High peaks, that bound the vale where now we are.
 Faint, and diminished to the gazing eye,
 Forest and field, and hill and dale appear, 60
 With all the shapes over their surface spread :
 But, while the gross and visible frame of things
 Relinquishes its hold upon the sense,
 Yea almost on the Mind herself, and seems
 All unsubstantialized,—how loud the voice
 Of waters, with invigorated peal
 From the full river in the vale below,
 Ascending ! For on that superior height
 Who sits, is disencumbered from the press 70
 Of near obstructions, and is privileged
 To breathe in solitude, above the host
 Of ever-humming insects, 'mid thin air
 That suits not them. The murmur of the leaves
 Many and idle, visits not his ear :
 This he is freed from, and from thousand notes
 (Not less unceasing, not less vain than these,)
 By which the finer passages of sense
 Are occupied ; and the Soul, that would incline
 To listen, is prevented or deterred. 80

' And may it not be hoped, that, placed by age
 In like removal, tranquil though severe,
 We are not so removed for utter loss ;
 But for some favour, suited to our need ?
 What more, than that the severing should confer
 Fresh power to commune with the invisible world,
 And hear the mighty stream of tendency
 Uttering, for elevation of our thought,
 A clear sonorous voice, inaudible
 To the vast multitude ; whose doom it is 90
 To run the giddy round of vain delight,
 Or fret and labour on the Plain below.

' But, if to such sublime ascent the hopes
 Of Man may rise, as to a welcome close
 And termination of his mortal course ;
 Them only can such hope inspire whose minds
 Have not been starved by absolute neglect ;
 Nor bodies crushed by unremitting toil ;
 To whom kind Nature, therefore, may afford
 Proof of the sacred love she bears for all ; 100
 Whose birthright Reason, therefore, may ensure.
 For me, consulting what I feel within
 In times when most existence with herself

Is satisfied, I cannot but believe,
 That, far as kindly Nature hath free scope
 And Reason's sway predominates; even so far,
 Country, society, and time itself,
 That saps the individual's bodily frame,
 And lays the generations low in dust,
 Do, by the almighty Ruler's grace, partake 110
 Of one maternal spirit, bringing forth
 And cherishing with ever-constant love,
 That tires not, nor betrays. Our life is turned
 Out of her course, wherever man is made
 An offering, or a sacrifice, a tool
 Or implement, a passive thing employed
 As a brute mean, without acknowledgment
 Of common right or interest in the end;
 Used or abused, as selfishness may prompt.
 Say, what can follow for a rational soul 120
 Perverted thus, but weakness in all good,
 And strength in evil? Hence an after-call
 For chastisement, and custody, and bonds,
 And oft-times Death, avenger of the past,
 And the sole guardian in whose hands we dare
 Entrust the future.—Not for these sad issues
 Was Man created; but to obey the law
 Of life, and hope, and action. And 'tis known
 That when we stand upon our native soil,
 Unelbowed by such objects as oppress 130
 Our active powers, those powers themselves become
 Strong to subvert our noxious qualities:
 They sweep distemper from the busy day,
 And make the chalice of the big round year
 Run o'er with gladness; whence the Being moves
 In beauty through the world; and all who see
 Bless him, rejoicing in his neighbourhood.'

'Then,' said the Solitary, 'by what force
 Of language shall a feeling heart express
 Her sorrow for that multitude in whom 140
 We look for health from seeds that have been sown
 In sickness, and for increase in a power
 That works but by extinction? On themselves
 They cannot lean, nor turn to their own hearts
 To know what they must do; their wisdom is
 To look into the eyes of others, thence
 To be instructed what they must avoid:
 Or rather, let us say, how least observed,
 How with most quiet and most silent death,

With the least taint and injury to the air 150
 The oppressor breathes, their human form divine,
 And their immortal soul, may waste away.'

The Sage rejoined, 'I thank you—you have spared
 My voice the utterance of a keen regret,
 A wide compassion which with you I share.
 When, heretofore, I placed before your sight
 A Little-one, subjected to the arts
 Of modern ingenuity, and made
 The senseless member of a vast machine,
 Serving as doth a spindle or a wheel; 160
 Think not, that, pitying him, I could forget
 The rustic Boy, who walks the fields, untaught;
 The slave of ignorance, and oft of want,
 And miserable hunger. Much, too much,
 Of this unhappy lot, in early youth
 We both have witnessed, lot which I myself
 Shared, though in mild and merciful degree:
 Yet was the mind to hinderances exposed,
 Through which I struggled, not without distress
 And sometimes injury, like a lamb enthralled 170
 'Mid thorns and brambles; or a bird that breaks
 Through a strong net, and mounts upon the wind,
 Though with her plumes impaired. If they, whose souls
 Should open while they range the richer fields
 Of merry England, are obstructed less
 By indigence, their ignorance is not less,
 Nor less to be deplored. For who can doubt
 That tens of thousands at this day exist
 Such as the boy you painted, lineal heirs
 Of those who once were vassals of her soil, 180
 Following its fortunes like the beasts or trees
 Which it sustained. But no one takes delight
 In this oppression; none are proud of it;
 It bears no sounding name, nor ever bore;
 A standing grievance, an indigenous vice
 Of every country under heaven. My thoughts
 Were turned to evils that are new and chosen,
 A bondage lurking under shape of good,—
 Arts, in themselves beneficent and kind,
 But all too fondly followed and too far;— 190
 To victims, which the merciful can see
 Nor think that they are victims;—turned to wrongs,
 By women, who have children of their own,
 Beheld without compassion, yea, with praise!
 I spake of mischief by the wise diffused

With gladness, thinking that the more it spreads
 The healthier, the securer, we become ;
 Delusion which a moment may destroy !
 Lastly I mourned for those whom I had seen
 Corrupted and cast down, on favoured ground, 200
 Where circumstance and nature had combined
 To shelter innocence, and cherish love ;
 Who, but for this intrusion, would have lived,
 Possessed of health, and strength, and peace of mind ;
 Thus would have lived, or never have been born.

‘ Alas ! what differs more than man from man !
 And whence that difference ? Whence but from him-
 self ?

For see the universal Race endowed
 With the same upright form ! The sun is fixed,
 And the infinite magnificence of heaven 210
 Fixed, within reach of every human eye ;
 The sleepless ocean murmurs for all ears ;
 The vernal field infuses fresh delight
 Into all hearts. Throughout the world of sense,
 Even as an object is sublime or fair,
 That object is laid open to the view
 Without reserve or veil ; and as a power
 Is salutary, or an influence sweet,
 Are each and all enabled to perceive
 That power, that influence, by impartial law. 220
 Gifts nobler are vouchsafed alike to all ;
 Reason, and, with that reason, smiles and tears ;
 Imagination, freedom in the will ;
 Conscience to guide and check ; and death to be
 Foretasted, immortality conceived
 By all,—a blissful immortality,
 To them whose holiness on earth shall make
 The Spirit capable of heaven, assured.

Strange, then, nor less than monstrous, might be
 deemed

The failure, if the Almighty, to this point 230
 Liberal and undistinguishing, should hide
 The excellence of moral qualities
 From common understanding ; leaving truth
 And virtue, difficult, abstruse, and dark ;
 Hard to be won, and only by a few ;
 Strange, should He deal herein with nice respects,
 And frustrate all the rest ! Believe it not :
 The primal duties shine aloft—like stars ;
 The charities that soothe, and heal, and bless,

Are scattered at the feet of Man—like flowers. 240
 The generous inclination, the just rule,
 Kind wishes, and good actions, and pure thoughts—
 No mystery is here! Here is no boon
 For high—yet not for low; for proudly graced—
 Yet not for meek of heart. The smoke ascends
 To heaven as lightly from the cottage-hearth
 As from the haughtiest palace. He, whose soul
 Ponders this true equality, may walk
 The fields of earth with gratitude and hope;
 Yet, in that meditation, will he find 250
 Motive to sadder grief, as we have found;
 Lamenting ancient virtues overthrown,
 And for the injustice grieving, that hath made
 So wide a difference between man and man.

‘Then let us rather fix our gladdened thoughts
 Upon the brighter scene. How blest that pair
 Of blooming Boys (whom we beheld even now)
 Blest in their several and their common lot!
 A few short hours of each returning day
 The thriving prisoners of their village-school: 260
 And thence let loose, to seek their pleasant homes
 Or range the grassy lawn in vacancy;
 To breathe and to be happy, run and shout
 Idle,—but no delay, no harm, no loss;
 For every genial power of heaven and earth,
 Through all the seasons of a changeful year,
 Obsequiously doth take upon herself
 To labour for them; bringing each in turn
 The tribute of enjoyment, knowledge, health,
 Beauty, or strength! Such privilege is theirs, 270
 Granted alike in the outset of their course
 To both; and, if that partnership must cease,
 I grieve not,’ to the Pastor here he turned,
 ‘Much as I glory in that child of yours,
 Repine not for his cottage-comrade, whom
 Belike no higher destiny awaits
 Than the old hereditary wish fulfilled;
 The wish for liberty to live—content
 With what Heaven grants, and die—in peace of mind,
 Within the bosom of his native vale. 280
 At least, whatever fate the noon of life
 Reserves for either, sure it is that both
 Have been permitted to enjoy the dawn;
 Whether regarded as a jocund time,
 That in itself may terminate, or lead

In course of nature to a sober eve.
Both have been fairly dealt with ; looking back
They will allow that justice has in them
Been shown, alike to body and to mind.'

He paused, as if revolving in his soul 290
Some weighty matter ; then, with fervent voice
And an impassioned majesty, exclaimed—

' O for the coming of that glorious time
When, prizing knowledge as her noblest wealth
And best protection, this imperial Realm,
While she exacts allegiance, shall admit
An obligation, on her part, to *teach*
Them who are born to serve her and obey ;
Binding herself by statute to secure
For all the children whom her soil maintains 300
The rudiments of letters, and inform
The mind with moral and religious truth,
Both understood and practised,—so that none,
However destitute, be left to droop
By timely culture unsustained ; or run
Into a wild disorder ; or be forced
To drudge through a weary life without the help
Of intellectual implements and tools ;
A savage horde among the civilised,
A servile band among the lordly free ! 310
This sacred right, the lisping babe proclaims
To be inherent in him, by Heaven's will,
For the protection of his innocence ;
And the rude boy—who, having overpast
The sinless age, by conscience is enrolled,
Yet mutinously knits his angry brow,
And lifts his wilful hand on mischief bent,
Or turns the godlike faculty of speech
To impious use—by process indirect
Declares his due, while he makes known his need. 320
—This sacred right is fruitlessly announced,
This universal plea in vain addressed,
To eyes and ears of parents who themselves
Did, in the time of their necessity,
Urge it in vain ; and, therefore, like a prayer
That from the humblest floor ascends to heaven,
It mounts to reach the State's parental ear ;
Who, if indeed she own a mother's heart,
And be not most unfeelingly devoid
Of gratitude to Providence, will grant 330

The unquestionable good—which, England, safe
 From interference of external force,
 May grant at leisure ; without risk incurred
 That what in wisdom for herself she doth,
 Others shall e'er be able to undo.

‘ Look ! and behold, from Calpe’s sunburnt cliffs
 To the flat margin of the Baltic sea,
 Long-reverenced titles cast away as weeds ;
 Laws overturned ; and territory split,
 Like fields of ice rent by the polar wind, 340
 And forced to join in less obnoxious shapes
 Which, ere they gain consistence, by a gust
 Of the same breath are shattered and destroyed.
 Meantime the sovereignty of these fair Isles
 Remains entire and indivisible :
 And, if that ignorance were removed, which breeds
 Within the compass of their several shores
 Dark discontent, or loud commotion, each
 Might still preserve the beautiful repose
 Of heavenly bodies shining in their spheres. 350
 —The discipline of slavery is unknown
 Among us,—hence the more do we require
 The discipline of virtue ; order else
 Cannot subsist, nor confidence, nor peace.
 Thus, duties rising out of good possest
 And prudent caution needful to avert
 Impending evil, equally require
 That the whole people should be taught and trained.
 So shall licentiousness and black resolve
 Be rooted out, and virtuous habits take 360
 Their place ; and genuine piety descend,
 Like an inheritance, from age to age.

‘ With such foundations laid, avaunt the fear
 Of numbers crowded on their native soil,
 To the prevention of all healthful growth
 Through mutual injury ! Rather in the law
 Of increase and the mandate from above
 Rejoice !—and ye have special cause for joy.
 —For, as the element of air affords
 An easy passage to the industrious bees 370
 Fraught with their burthens ; and a way as smooth
 For those ordained to take their sounding flight
 From the thronged hive, and settle where they list
 In fresh abodes—their labour to renew ;
 So the wide waters, open to the power,
 The will, the instincts, and appointed needs

Of Britain, do invite her to cast off
Her swarms, and in succession send them forth ;
Bound to establish new communities
On every shore whose aspect favours hope 380
Or bold adventure ; promising to skill
And perseverance their deserved reward.

‘ Yes,’ he continued, kindling as he spake,
‘ Change wide, and deep, and silently performed,
This Land shall witness ; and as days roll on,
Earth’s universal frame shall feel the effect ;
Even till the smallest habitable rock,
Beaten by lonely billows, hear the songs
Of humanised society ; and bloom
With civil arts, that shall breathe forth their fragrance,
A grateful tribute to all-ruling Heaven. 391
From culture, unexclusively bestowed
On Albion’s noble Race in freedom born,
Expect these mighty issues : from the pains
And faithful care of unambitious schools
Instructing simple childhood’s ready ear :
Thence look for these magnificent results !
—Vast the circumference of hope—and ye
Are at its centre, British Lawgivers ;
Ah ! sleep not there in shame ! Shall Wisdom’s voice
From out the bosom of these troubled times 401
Repeat the dictates of her calmer mind,
And shall the venerable halls ye fill
Refuse to echo the sublime decree ?
Trust not to partial care a general good ;
Transfer not to futurity a work
Of urgent need.—Your Country must complete
Her glorious destiny. Begin even now,
Now, when oppression, like the Egyptian plague
Of darkness, stretched o’er guilty Europe, makes 410
The brightness more conspicuous that invests
The happy Island where ye think and act ;
Now, when destruction is a prime pursuit,
Show to the wretched nations for what end
The powers of civil polity were given.’

Abruptly here, but with a graceful air,
The Sage broke off. No sooner had he ceased
Than, looking forth, the gentle Lady said,
‘ Behold the shades of afternoon have fallen
Upon this flowery slope ; and see—beyond— 420
The silvery lake is streaked with placid blue ;

As if preparing for the peace of evening.
 How temptingly the landscape shines! The air
 Breathes invitation; easy is the walk
 To the lake's margin, where a boat lies moored
 Under a sheltering tree.'—Upon this hint
 We rose together: all were pleased; but most
 The beauteous girl, whose cheek was flushed with joy.
 Light as a sunbeam glides along the hills
 She vanished—eager to impart the scheme 430
 To her loved brother and his shy compeer.
 —Now was there bustle in the Vicar's house
 And earnest preparation.—Forth we went,
 And down the vale along the streamlet's edge
 Pursued our way, a broken company,
 Mute or conversing, single or in pairs.
 Thus having reached a bridge, that overarched
 The hasty rivulet where it lay becalmed
 In a deep pool, by happy chance we saw
 A twofold image; on a grassy bank 440
 A snow-white ram, and in the crystal flood
 Another and the same! Most beautiful,
 On the green turf, with his imperial front
 Shaggy and bold, and wreathèd horns superb,
 The breathing creature stood; as beautiful,
 Beneath him, showed his shadowy counterpart.
 Each had his glowing mountains, each his sky,
 And each seemed centre of his own fair world:
 Antipodes unconscious of each other,
 Yet, in partition, with their several spheres, 450
 Blended in perfect stillness, to our sight!

'Ah! what a pity were it to disperse,
 Or to disturb, so fair a spectacle,
 And yet a breath can do it!'

These few words
 The Lady whispered, while we stood and gazed
 Gathered together, all in still delight,
 Not without awe. Thence passing on, she said
 In like low voice to my particular ear,
 'I love to hear that eloquent old Man
 Pour forth his meditations, and descant 460
 On human life from infancy to age.
 How pure his spirit! in what vivid hues
 His mind gives back the various forms of things,
 Caught in their fairest, happiest, attitude!
 While he is speaking, I have power to see
 Even as he sees; but when his voice hath ceased,

Then, with a sigh, sometimes I feel, as now,
 That combinations so serene and bright
 Cannot be lasting in a world like ours,
 Whose highest beauty, beautiful as it is, 470
 Like that reflected in yon quiet pool,
 Seems but a fleeting sun-beam's gift, whose peace
 The sufferance only of a breath of air !'

More had she said—but sportive shouts were heard
 Sent from the jocund hearts of those two Boys,
 Who, bearing each a basket on his arm,
 Down the green field came tripping after us.
 With caution we embarked ; and now the pair
 For prouder service were address ; but each,
 Wishful to leave an opening for my choice, 480
 Dropped the light oar his eager hand had seized.
 Thanks given for that becoming courtesy,
 Their place I took—and for a grateful office
 Pregnant with recollections of the time
 When, on thy bosom, spacious Windermere !
 A Youth, I practised this delightful art ;
 Tossed on the waves alone, or 'mid a crew
 Of joyous comrades. Soon as the reedy marge
 Was cleared, I dipped, with arms accordant, oars
 Free from obstruction ; and the boat advanced 490
 Through crystal water, smoothly as a hawk,
 That, disentangled from the shady boughs
 Of some thick wood, her place of covert, cleaves
 With correspondent wings the abyss of air.
 —'Observe,' the Vicar said, 'yon rocky isle
 With birch-trees fringed ; my hand shall guide the
 helm,
 While thitherward we shape our course ; or while
 We seek that other, on the western shore ;
 Where the bare columns of those lofty firs,
 Supporting gracefully a massy dome 500
 Of sombre foliage, seem to imitate
 A Grecian temple rising from the Deep.'

'Turn where we may,' said I, 'we cannot err
 In this delicious region.'—Cultured slopes,
 Wild tracts of forest-ground, and scattered groves,
 And mountains bare, or clothed with ancient woods,
 Surrounded us ; and, as we held our way
 Along the level of the glassy flood,
 They ceased not to surround us ; change of place,
 From kindred features diversely combined, 510

Producing change of beauty ever new.
 —Ah ! that such beauty, varying in the light
 Of living nature, cannot be portrayed
 By words, nor by the pencil's silent skill ;
 But is the property of him alone
 Who hath beheld it, noted it with care,
 And in his mind recorded it with love !
 Suffice it, therefore, if the rural Muse
 Vouchsafe sweet influence, while her Poet speaks
 Of trivial occupations well devised, 520
 And unsought pleasures springing up by chance ;
 As if some friendly Genius had ordained
 That, as the day thus far had been enriched
 By acquisition of sincere delight,
 The same should be continued to its close.

One spirit animating old and young,
 A gipsy-fire we kindled on the shore
 Of the fair Isle with birch-trees fringed—and there,
 Merrily seated in a ring, partook
 A choice repast—served by our young companions 530
 With rival earnestness and kindred glee.
 Launched from our hands the smooth stone skimmed
 the lake ;
 With shouts we raised the echoes ;—stiller sounds
 The lovely Girl supplied—a simple song,
 Whose low tones reached not to the distant rocks
 To be repeated thence, but gently sank
 Into our hearts ; and charmed the peaceful flood.
 Rapaciously we gathered flowery spoils
 From land and water ; lilies of each hue—
 Golden and white, that float upon the waves, 540
 And court the wind ; and leaves of that shy plant,
 (Her flowers were shed) the lily of the vale,
 That loves the ground, and from the sun withholds
 Her pensive beauty, from the breeze her sweets.

Such product, and such pastime, did the place
 And season yield ; but, as we re-embarked,
 Leaving, in quest of other scenes, the shore
 Of that wild spot, the Solitary said
 In a low voice, yet careless who might hear,
 'The fire, that burned so brightly to our wish, 550
 Where is it now ?—Deserted on the beach—
 Dying, or dead ! Nor shall the fanning breeze
 Revive its ashes. What care we for this,
 Whose ends are gained ? Behold an emblem here

Of one day's pleasure, and all mortal joys !
And, in this unpremeditated slight
Of that which is no longer needed, see
The common course of human gratitude !'

This plaintive note disturbed not the repose
Of the still evening. Right across the lake 560
Our pinnacle moves ; then, coasting creek and bay,
Glades we behold, and into thickets peep,
Where couch the spotted deer ; or raised our eyes
To shaggy steeps on which the careless goat
Browsed by the side of dashing waterfalls ;
And thus the bark, meandering with the shore,
Pursued her voyage, till a natural pier
Of jutting rock invited us to land.

Alert to follow as the Pastor led,
We clomb a green hill's side ; and, as we clomb, 570
The Valley, opening out her bosom, gave
Fair prospect, intercepted less and less,
O'er the flat meadows and indented coast
Of the smooth lake, in compass seen :—far off,
And yet conspicuous, stood the old Church-tower,
In majesty presiding over fields
And habitations seemingly preserved
From all intrusion of the restless world
By rocks impassable and mountains huge.

Soft heath this elevated spot supplied, 580
And choice of moss-clad stones, whereon we couched
Or sate reclined ; admiring quietly
The general aspect of the scene ; but each
Not seldom over anxious to make known
His own discoveries ; or to favourite points
Directing notice, merely from a wish
To impart a joy, imperfect while unshared.
That rapturous moment never shall I forget
When these particular interests were effaced
From every mind !—Already had the sun, 590
Sinking with less than ordinary state,
Attained his western bound ; but rays of light—
Now suddenly diverging from the orb
Retired behind the mountain-tops or veiled
By the dense air—shot upwards to the crown
Of the blue firmament—aloft, and wide :
And multitudes of little floating clouds,
Through their ethereal texture pierced—ere we,

Who saw, of change were conscious—had become
 Vivid as fire; clouds separately poised,— 600
 Innumerable multitude of forms
 Scattered through half the circle of the sky;
 And giving back, and shedding each on each,
 With prodigal communion, the bright hues
 Which from the unapparent fount of glory
 They had imbibed, and ceased not to receive.
 That which the heavens displayed, the liquid deep
 Repeated; but with unity sublime!

While from the grassy mountain's open side
 We gazed, in silence hushed, with eyes intent 610
 On the refulgent spectacle, diffused
 Through earth, sky, water, and all visible space,
 The Priest in holy transport thus exclaimed.

'Eternal Spirit! universal God!
 Power inaccessible to human thought,
 Save by degrees and steps which thou hast deigned
 To furnish; for this effluence of thyself,
 To the infirmity of mortal sense
 Vouchsafed; this local transitory type 620
 Of thy paternal splendours, and the pomp
 Of those who fill thy courts in highest heaven,
 The radiant Cherubim;—accept the thanks
 Which we, thy humble Creatures, here convened,
 Presume to offer; we, who—from the breast
 Of the frail earth, permitted to behold
 The faint reflections only of thy face—
 Are yet exalted, and in soul adore!
 Such as they are who in thy presence stand
 Unsullied, incorruptible, and drink 630
 Imperishable majesty streamed forth
 From thy empyreal throne, the elect of earth
 Shall be—divested at the appointed hour
 Of all dishonour, cleansed from mortal stain.
 —Accomplish, then, their number; and conclude
 Time's weary course! Or if, by thy decree,
 The consummation that will come by stealth
 Be yet far distant, let thy Word prevail,
 Oh! let thy Word prevail, to take away
 The sting of human nature. Spread the law,
 As it is written in thy holy book, 640
 Throughout all lands: let every nation hear
 The high behest, and every heart obey;
 Both for the love of purity, and hope

Which it affords, to such as do thy will
And persevere in good, that they shall rise,
To have a nearer view of thee, in heaven.
—Father of good! this prayer in bounty grant,
In mercy grant it, to thy wretched sons.
Then, nor till then, shall persecution cease,
And cruel wars expire. The way is marked,
The guide appointed, and the ransom paid. 650
Alas! the nations, who of yore received
These tidings, and in Christian temples meet
The sacred truth to acknowledge, linger still;
Preferring bonds and darkness to a state
Of holy freedom, by redeeming love
Proffered to all, while yet on earth detained.

‘So fare the many; and the thoughtful few,
Who in the anguish of their souls bewail
This dire perverseness, cannot choose but ask, 660
Shall it endure?—Shall enmity and strife,
Falsehood and guile, be left to sow their seed;
And the kind never perish? Is the hope
Fallacious, or shall righteousness obtain
A peaceable dominion, wide as earth,
And ne’er to fail? Shall that blest day arrive
When they, whose choice or lot it is to dwell
In crowded cities, without fear shall live
Studious of mutual benefit; and he,
Whom Morn awakens, among dews and flowers 670
Of every clime, to till the lonely field,
Be happy in himself?—The law of faith
Working through love, such conquest shall it gain,
Such triumph over sin and guilt achieve?
Almighty Lord, thy further grace impart!
And with that help the wonder shall be seen
Fulfilled, the hope accomplished: and thy praise
Be sung with transport and unceasing joy.

‘Once,’ and with mild demeanour, as he spake,
On us the venerable Pastor turned 680
His beaming eye that had been raised to Heaven,
‘Once, while the Name, Jehovah, was a sound
Within the circuit of this sea-girt isle
Unheard, the savage nations bowed the head
To Gods delighting in remorseless deeds;
Gods which themselves had fashioned, to promote
Ill purposes, and flatter foul desires.
Then, in the bosom of yon mountain-cove,

To those inventions of corrupted man
 Mysterious rites were solemnised ; and there— 690
 Amid impending rocks and gloomy woods—
 Of those terrific Idols some received
 Such dismal service, that the loudest voice
 Of the swoln cataracts (which now are heard
 Soft murmuring) was too weak to overcome,
 Though aided by wild winds, the groans and shrieks
 Of human victims, offered up to appease
 Or to propitiate. And, if living eyes
 Had visionary faculties to see
 The thing that hath been as the thing that is, 700
 Aghast we might behold this crystal Mere
 Bedimmed with smoke, in wreaths voluminous,
 Flung from the body of devouring fires,
 To Taranis erected on the heights
 By priestly hands, for sacrifice performed
 Exultingly, in view of open day
 And full assemblage of a barbarous host ;
 Or to Andates, female Power ! who gave
 (For so they fancied) glorious victory.
 —A few rude monuments of mountain-stone 710
 Survive ; all else is swept away.—How bright
 The appearances of things ! From such, how changed
 The existing worship ; and with those compared,
 The worshippers how innocent and blest !
 So wide the difference, a willing mind
 Might almost think, at this affecting hour,
 That paradise, the lost abode of man,
 Was raised again : and to a happy few,
 In its original beauty, here restored.

‘ Whence but from thee, the true and only God, 720
 And from the faith derived through Him who bled
 Upon the cross, this marvellous advance
 Of good from evil ; as if one extreme
 Were left, the other gained.—O ye, who come
 To kneel devoutly in yon reverend Pile,
 Called to such office by the peaceful sound
 Of sabbath bells ; and ye, who sleep in earth,
 All cares forgotten, round its hallowed walls !
 For you, in presence of this little band
 Gathered together on the green hill-side, 730
 Your Pastor is emboldened to prefer
 Vocal thanksgivings to the eternal King ;
 Whose love, whose counsel, whose commands, have
 made

Your very poorest rich in peace of thought
 And in good works ; and him, who is endowed
 With scantiest knowledge, master of all truth
 Which the salvation of his soul requires.
 Conscious of that abundant favour showered
 On you, the children of my humble care,
 And this dear land, our country, while on earth 740
 We sojourn, have I lifted up my soul,
 Joy giving voice to fervent gratitude.
 These barren rocks, your stern inheritance ;
 These fertile fields, that recompense your pains ;
 The shadowy vale, the sunny mountain-top ;
 Woods waving in the wind their lofty heads,
 Or hushed ; the roaring waters, and the still—
 They see the offering of my lifted hands,
 They hear my lips present their sacrifice,
 They know if I be silent, morn or even : 750
 For, though in whispers speaking, the full heart
 Will find a vent ; and thought is praise to him,
 Audible praise, to thee, omniscient Mind,
 From whom all gifts descend, all blessings flow !'

This vesper-service closed, without delay,
 From that exalted station to the plain
 Descending, we pursued our homeward course,
 In mute composure, o'er the shadowy lake,
 Under a faded sky. No trace remained
 Of those celestial splendours ; grey the vault— 760
 Pure, cloudless, ether ; and the star of eve
 Was wanting ; but inferior lights appeared
 Faintly, too faint almost for sight ; and some
 Above the darkened hills stood boldly forth
 In twinkling lustre, ere the boat attained
 Her mooring-place ; where, to the sheltering tree,
 Our youthful Voyagers bound fast her prow,
 With prompt yet careful hands. This done, we paced
 The dewy fields ; but ere the Vicar's door
 Was reached, the Solitary checked his steps ; 770
 Then, intermingling thanks, on each bestowed
 A farewell salutation ; and, the like
 Receiving, took the slender path that leads
 To the one cottage in the lonely dell :
 But turned not without welcome promise made
 That he would share the pleasures and pursuits
 Of yet another summer's day, not loth
 To wander with us through the fertile vales,
 And o'er the mountain-wastes. ' Another sun,'

Said he, 'shall shine upon us, ere we part ;
Another sun, and peradventure more ;
If time, with free consent, be yours to give,
And season favours.'

780

To enfeebled Power,
From this communion with uninjured Minds,
What renovation had been brought ; and what
Degree of healing to a wounded spirit,
Dejected, and habitually disposed
To seek, in degradation of the Kind,
Excuse and solace for her own defects ;
How far those erring notions were reformed ;
And whether aught, of tendency as good
And pure, from further intercourse ensued ;
This—if delightful hopes, as heretofore,
Inspire the serious song, and gentle Hearts
Cherish, and lofty Minds approve the past—
My future labours may not leave untold.

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THE PRELUDE

OR, GROWTH OF A POET'S MIND

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL POEM

ADVERTISEMENT

THE following Poem was commenced in the beginning of the year 1799, and completed in the summer of 1805.

The design and occasion of the work are described by the Author in his Preface to the 'Excursion,' first published in 1814, where he thus speaks:—

'Several years ago, when the Author retired to his native mountains with the hope of being enabled to construct a literary work that might live, it was a reasonable thing that he should take a review of his own mind, and examine how far Nature and Education had qualified him for such an employment.

'As subsidiary to this preparation, he undertook to record, in verse, the origin and progress of his own powers, as far as he was acquainted with them.

'That work, addressed to a dear friend, most distinguished for his knowledge and genius, and to whom the Author's intellect is deeply indebted, has been long finished; and the result of the investigation which gave rise to it, was a determination to compose a philosophical Poem, containing views of Man, Nature, and Society, and to be entitled the 'Recluse'; as having for its principal subject the sensations and opinions of a poet living in retirement.

'The preparatory poem is biographical, and conducts the history of the Author's mind to the point when he was emboldened to hope that his faculties were sufficiently matured for entering upon the arduous labour which he had proposed to himself; and the two works have the same kind of relation to each other, if he may so express himself, as the Ante-chapel has to the body of a Gothic Church. Continuing this allusion, he may be permitted to add, that his minor pieces, which have been long before the public, when they shall be properly arranged, will be found by the attentive reader to have such connection with the main work as may give them claim to be likened to the little cells, oratories, and sepulchral recesses, ordinarily included in those edifices.'

Such was the Author's language in the year 1814.

It will thence be seen, that the present Poem was intended to be introductory to the 'Recluse,' and that the 'Recluse,' if completed, would have consisted of Three Parts. Of these, the Second Part alone, viz. the 'Excursion,' was finished, and given to the world by the Author.

The First Book of the First Part of the 'Recluse,' still remains in manuscript; but the Third Part was only planned. The materials of which it would have been formed have, however, been incorporated, for the most part, in the Author's other Publications, written subsequently to the 'Excursion.'

The Friend, to whom the present Poem is addressed, was the late SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE, who was resident in Malta, for the restoration of his health, when the greater part of it was composed.

Mr. Coleridge read a considerable portion of the Poem while he was abroad; and his feelings, on hearing it recited by the Author (after his return to his own country) are recorded in his Verses, addressed to Mr. Wordsworth, which will be found in the 'Sibylline Leaves,' p. 197, ed. 1817, or 'Poetical Works, by S. T. Coleridge,' vol. i. p. 206.

RYDAL MOUNT,
July 13th, 1850.

BOOK FIRST

INTRODUCTION

CHILDHOOD AND SCHOOL-TIME

OH there is blessing in this gentle breeze,
 A visitant that while it fans my cheek
 Doth seem half-conscious of the joy it brings
 From the green fields, and from yon azure sky.
 Whate'er its mission, the soft breeze can come
 To none more grateful than to me; escaped
 From the vast city, where I long had pined
 A discontented sojourner: now free,
 Free as a bird to settle where I will.
 What dwelling shall receive me? in what vale 10
 Shall be my harbour? underneath what grove
 Shall I take up my home? and what clear stream
 Shall with its murmur lull me into rest?
 The earth is all before me. With a heart
 Joyous, nor scared at its own liberty,
 I look about; and should the chosen guide
 Be nothing better than a wandering cloud,
 I cannot miss my way. I breathe again!
 Trances of thought and mountings of the mind
 Come fast upon me: it is shaken off, 20
 That burthen of my own unnatural self,
 The heavy weight of many a weary day
 Not mine, and such as were not made for me.
 Long months of peace (if such bold word accord
 With any promises of human life),
 Long months of ease and undisturbed delight
 Are mine in prospect; whither shall I turn,
 By road or pathway, or through trackless field,
 Up hill or down, or shall some floating thing
 Upon the river point me out my course? 30

Dear Liberty! Yet what would it avail
 But for a gift that consecrates the joy?

For I, methought, while the sweet breath of heaven
 Was blowing on my body, felt within
 A correspondent breeze, that gently moved
 With quickening virtue, but is now become
 A tempest, a redundant energy,
 Vexing its own creation. Thanks to both,
 And their congenial powers, that, while they join
 In breaking up a long-continued frost,
 Bring with them vernal promises, the hope
 Of active days urged on by flying hours,—
 Days of sweet leisure, taxed with patient thought
 Abstruse, nor wanting punctual service high,
 Matins and vespers of harmonious verse !

40

Thus far, O Friend ! did I, not used to make
 A present joy the matter of a song,
 Pour forth that day my soul in measured strains
 That would not be forgotten, and are here
 Recorded : to the open fields I told
 A prophecy : poetic numbers came
 Spontaneously to clothe in priestly robe
 A renovated spirit singled out,
 Such hope was mine, for holy services.
 My own voice cheered me, and, far more, the mind's
 Internal echo of the imperfect sound ;
 To both I listened, drawing from them both
 A cheerful confidence in things to come.

50

Content and not unwilling now to give
 A respite to this passion, I paced on
 With brisk and eager steps ; and came, at length,
 To a green shady place, where down I sate
 Beneath a tree ; slackening my thoughts by choice,
 And settling into gentler happiness.
 'Twas autumn, and a clear and placid day,
 With warmth, as much as needed, from a sun
 Two hours declined towards the west ; a day
 With silver clouds, and sunshine on the grass,
 And in the sheltered and the sheltering grove
 A perfect stillness. Many were the thoughts
 Encouraged and dismissed, till choice was made
 Of a known Vale, whither my feet should turn,
 Nor rest till they had reached the very door
 Of the one cottage which methought I saw.
 No picture of mere memory ever looked
 So fair ; and while upon the fancied scene
 I gazed with growing love, a higher power

60

70

Than Fancy gave assurance of some work
 Of glory there forthwith to be begun,
 Perhaps too there performed. Thus long I mused, 80
 Nor e'er lost sight of what I mused upon,
 Save when, amid the stately grove of oaks,
 Now here, now there, an acorn, from its cup
 Dislodged, through sere leaves rustled, or at once
 To the bare earth dropped with a startling sound.
 From that soft couch I rose not, till the sun
 Had almost touched the horizon; casting then
 A backward glance upon the curling cloud
 Of city smoke, by distance ruralised;
 Keen as a Truant or a Fugitive, 90
 But as a Pilgrim resolute, I took,
 Even with the chance equipment of that hour,
 The road that pointed toward the chosen Vale.
 It was a splendid evening, and my soul
 Once more made trial of her strength, nor lacked
 Æolian visitations; but the harp
 Was soon defrauded, and the banded host
 Of harmony dispersed in straggling sounds,
 And lastly utter silence! 'Be it-so;
 Why think of anything but present good?' 100
 So, like a home-bound labourer, I pursued
 My way beneath the mellowing sun, that shed
 Mild influence; nor left in me one wish
 Again to bend the Sabbath of that time
 To a servile yoke. What need of many words?
 A pleasant loitering journey, through three days
 Continued, brought me to my hermitage.
 I spare to tell of what ensued, the life
 In common things—the endless store of things,
 Rare, or at least so seeming, every day 110
 Found all about me in one neighbourhood—
 The self-congratulation, and, from morn
 To night, unbroken cheerfulness serene.
 But speedily an earnest longing rose
 To brace myself to some determined aim,
 Reading or thinking; either to lay up
 New stores, or rescue from decay the old
 By timely interference: and therewith
 Came hopes still higher, that with outward life
 I might endure some airy phantasies 120
 That had been floating loose about for years,
 And to such beings temperately deal forth
 The many feelings that oppressed my heart.
 That hope hath been discouraged; welcome light

Dawns from the east, but dawns to disappear
 And mock me with a sky that ripens not
 Into a steady morning : if my mind,
 Remembering the bold promise of the past,
 Would gladly grapple with some noble theme,
 Vain is her wish ; where'er she turns she finds
 Impediments from day to day renewed. 130

And now it would content me to yield up
 Those lofty hopes awhile, for present gifts
 Of humbler industry. But, oh, dear Friend !
 The Poet, gentle creature as he is,
 Hath, like the Lover, his unruly times ;
 His fits when he is neither sick nor well,
 Though no distress be near him but his own
 Unmanageable thoughts : his mind, best pleased
 While she as duteous as the mother dove 140
 Sits brooding, lives not always to that end,
 But like the innocent bird, hath goadings on
 That drive her as in trouble through the groves ;
 With me is now such passion, to be blamed
 No otherwise than as it lasts too long.

When, as becomes a man who would prepare
 For such an arduous work, I through myself
 Make rigorous inquisition, the report
 Is often cheering ; for I neither seem
 To lack that first great gift, the vital soul, 150
 Nor general Truths, which are themselves a sort
 Of Elements and Agents, Under-powers,
 Subordinate helpers of the living mind :
 Nor am I naked of external things,
 Forms, images, nor numerous other aids
 Of less regard, though won perhaps with toil
 And needful to build up a Poet's praise.
 Time, place, and manners do I seek, and these
 Are found in plenteous store, but nowhere such
 As may be singled out with steady choice ; 160
 No little band of yet remembered names
 Whom I, in perfect confidence, might hope
 To summon back from lonesome banishment,
 And make them dwellers in the hearts of men
 Now living, or to live in future years.
 Sometimes the ambitious Power of choice, mistaking
 Proud spring-tide swellings for a regular sea,
 Will settle on some British theme, some old
 Romantic tale by Milton left unsung ;

More often turning to some gentle place 170
 Within the groves of Chivalry, I pipe
 To shepherd swains, or seated harp in hand,
 Amid reposing knights by a river side
 Or fountain, listen to the grave reports
 Of dire enchantments faced and overcome
 By the strong mind, and tales of warlike feats,
 Where spear encountered spear, and sword with sword
 Fought, as if conscious of the blazonry
 That the shield bore, so glorious was the strife ;
 Whence inspiration for a song that winds 180
 Through ever-changing scenes of votive quest
 Wrongs to redress, harmonious tribute paid
 To patient courage and unblemished truth,
 To firm devotion, zeal unquenchable,
 And Christian meekness hallowing faithful loves.
 Sometimes, more sternly moved, I would relate
 How vanquished Mithridates northward passed,
 And, hidden in the cloud of years, became
 Odin, the Father of a race by whom 190
 Perished the Roman Empire : how the friends
 And followers of Sertorius, out of Spain
 Flying, found shelter in the Fortunate Isles,
 And left their usages, their arts and laws,
 To disappear by a slow gradual death,
 To dwindle and to perish one by one,
 Starved in those narrow bounds : but not the soul
 Of Liberty, which fifteen hundred years
 Survived, and, when the European came
 With skill and power that might not be withstood,
 Did, like a pestilence, maintain its hold 200
 And wasted down by glorious death that race
 Of natural heroes : or I would record
 How, in tyrannic times, some high-souled man,
 Unnamed among the chronicles of kings,
 Suffered in silence for Truth's sake : or tell,
 How that one Frenchman, through continued force
 Of meditation on the inhuman deeds
 Of those who conquered first the Indian Isles,
 Went single in his ministry across
 The Ocean ; not to comfort the oppressed, 210
 But, like a thirsty wind, to roam about
 Withering the Oppressor : how Gustavus sought
 Help at his need in Dalecarlia's mines :
 How Wallace fought for Scotland ; left the name
 Of Wallace to be found, like a wild flower,
 All over his dear Country ; left the deeds

Of Wallace, like a family of Ghosts,
To people the steep rocks and river banks,
Her natural sanctuaries, with a local soul
Of independence and stern liberty. 220
Sometimes it suits me better to invent
A tale from my own heart, more near akin
To my own passions and habitual thoughts;
Some variegated story, in the main
Lofty,—but the unsubstantial structure melts
Before the very sun that brightens it,
Mist into air dissolving! Then a wish,
My last and favourite aspiration, mounts
With yearning toward some philosophic song
Of Truth that cherishes our daily life; 230
With meditations passionate from deep
Recesses in man's heart, immortal verse
Thoughtfully fitted to the Orphean lyre;
But from this awful burthen I full soon
Take refuge and beguile myself with trust
That mellow years will bring a riper mind
And clearer insight. Thus my days are past
In contradiction; with no skill to part
Vague longing, haply bred by want of power,
From paramount impulse not to be withstood, 240
A timorous capacity from prudence,
From circumspection infinite delay.
Humility and modest awe themselves
Betray me, serving often for a cloak
To a more subtle selfishness; that now
Locks every function up in blank reserve,
Now dupes me, trusting to an anxious eye
That with intrusive restlessness beats off
Simplicity and self-presented truth.
Ah! better far than this, to stray about 250
Voluptuously through fields and rural walks,
And ask no record of the hours, resigned
To vacant musing, unreprieved neglect
Of all things, and deliberate holiday.
Far better never to have heard the name
Of zeal and just ambition, than to live
Baffled and plagued by a mind that every hour
Turns recreant to her task; takes heart again,
Then feels immediately some hollow thought
Hang like an interdict upon her hopes. 260
This is my lot; for either still I find
Some imperfection in the chosen theme,
Or see of absolute accomplishment

Much wanting, so much wanting, in myself,
 That I recoil and droop, and seek repose
 In listlessness from vain perplexity,
 Unprofitably travelling toward the grave,
 Like a false steward who hath much received
 And renders nothing back.

Was it for this
 That one, the fairest of all rivers, loved 270
 To blend his murmurs with my nurse's song,
 And, from his alder shades and rocky falls,
 And from his fords and shallows, sent a voice
 That flowed along my dreams? For this, didst thou,
 O Derwent! winding among grassy holms
 Where I was looking on, a babe in arms,
 Make ceaseless music that composed my thoughts
 To more than infant softness, giving me
 Amid the fretful dwellings of mankind
 A foretaste, a dim earnest, of the calm 280
 That Nature breathes among the hills and groves?

When he had left the mountains and received
 On his smooth breast the shadow of those towers
 That yet survive, a shattered monument
 Of feudal sway, the bright blue river passed
 Along the margin of our terrace walk ;
 A tempting playmate whom we dearly loved.
 Oh, many a time have I, a five years' child,
 In a small mill-race severed from his stream,
 Made one long bathing of a summer's day ; 290
 Basked in the sun, and plunged and basked again
 Alternate, all a summer's day, or scoured
 The sandy fields, leaping through flowery groves
 Of yellow ragwort ; or when rock and hill,
 The woods, and distant Skiddaw's lofty height,
 Were bronzed with deepest radiance, stood alone
 Beneath the sky, as if I had been born
 On Indian plains, and from my mother's hut
 Had run abroad in wantonness, to sport,
 A naked savage, in the thunder shower. 300

Fair seed-time had my soul, and I grew up
 Fostered alike by beauty and by fear :
 Much favoured in my birthplace, and no less
 In that beloved Vale to which erelong
 We were transplanted ;—there were we let loose
 For sports of wider range. Ere I had told
 Ten birth-days, when among the mountain-slopes

Frost, and the breath of frosty wind, had snapped
 The last autumnal crocus, 'twas my joy
 With store of springes o'er my shoulder hung 310
 To range the open heights where woodcocks run
 Along the smooth green turf. Through half the night,
 Scudding away from snare to snare, I plied
 That anxious visitation ;—moon and stars
 Were shining o'er my head. I was alone,
 And seemed to be a trouble to the peace
 That dwelt among them. Sometimes it befell
 In these night wanderings, that a strong desire
 O'erpowered my better reason, and the bird
 Which was the captive of another's toil 320
 Became my prey ; and when the deed was done
 I heard among the solitary hills
 Low breathings coming after me, and sounds
 Of undistinguishable motion, steps
 Almost as silent as the turf they trod.

Nor less, when spring had warmed the cultured Vale,
 Moved we as plunderers where the mother-bird
 Had in high places built her lodge ; though mean
 Our object and inglorious, yet the end
 Was not ignoble. Oh ! when I have hung 330
 Above the raven's nest, by knots of grass
 And half-inch fissures in the slippery rock
 But ill sustained, and almost (so it seemed)
 Suspended by the blast that blew amain,
 Shouldering the naked crag, oh, at that time
 While on the perilous ridge I hung alone,
 With what strange utterance did the loud dry wind
 Blow through my ear ! the sky seemed not a sky
 Of earth—and with what motion moved the clouds !

Dust as we are, the immortal spirit grows 340
 Like harmony in music ; there is a dark
 Inscrutable workmanship that reconciles
 Discordant elements, makes them cling together
 In one society. How strange that all
 The terrors, pains, and early miseries,
 Regrets, vexations, lassitudes interfused
 Within my mind, should e'er have borne a part,
 And that a needful part, in making up
 The calm existence that is mine when I
 Am worthy of myself ! Praise to the end ! 350
 Thanks to the means which Nature deigned to
 employ ;

Whether her fearless visitings, or those
 That came with soft alarm, like hurtless light
 Opening the peaceful clouds; or she may use
 Severer interventions, ministry
 More palpable, as best might suit her aim.

One summer evening (led by her) I found
 A little boat tied to a willow tree
 Within a rocky cave, its usual home.
 Straight I unloosed her chain, and stepping in 360
 Pushed from the shore. It was an act of stealth
 And troubled pleasure, nor without the voice
 Of mountain-echoes did my boat move on;
 Leaving behind her still, on either side,
 Small circles glittering idly in the moon,
 Until they melted all into one track
 Of sparkling light. But now, like one who rows,
 Proud of his skill, to reach a chosen point
 With an unswerving line, I fixed my view
 Upon the summit of a craggy ridge, 370
 The horizon's utmost boundary; far above
 Was nothing but the stars and the grey sky.
 She was an elfin pinnace; lustily
 I dipped my oars into the silent lake,
 And, as I rose upon the stroke, my boat
 Went heaving through the water like a swan;
 When, from behind that craggy steep till then
 The horizon's bound, a huge peak, black and huge,
 As if with voluntary power instinct,
 Upreared its head. I struck and struck again, 380
 And growing still in stature the grim shape
 Towered up between me and the stars, and still,
 For so it seemed, with purpose of its own
 And measured motion like a living thing,
 Strode after me. With trembling oars I turned,
 And through the silent water stole my way
 Back to the covert of the willow tree;
 There in her mooring-place I left my bark,—
 And through the meadows homeward went, in grave
 And serious mood; but after I had seen 390
 That spectacle, for many days, my brain
 Worked with a dim and undetermined sense
 Of unknown modes of being; o'er my thoughts
 There hung a darkness, call it solitude
 Or blank desertion. No familiar shapes
 Remained, no pleasant images of trees,
 Of sea or sky, no colours of green fields;

But huge and mighty forms, that do not live
Like living men, moved slowly through the mind
By day, and were a trouble to my dreams.

400

Wisdom and Spirit of the universe !
Thou Soul that art the eternity of thought,
That givest to forms and images a breath
And everlasting motion, not in vain
By day or star-light thus from my first dawn
Of childhood didst thou intertwine for me
The passions that build up our human soul,
Not with the mean and vulgar works of man,
But with high objects, with enduring things—
With life and nature—purifying thus
The elements of feeling and of thought,
And sanctifying, by such discipline,
Both pain and fear, until we recognise
A grandeur in the beatings of the heart.
Nor was this fellowship vouchsafed to me
With stinted kindness. In November days,
When vapours rolling down the valley made
A lonely scene more lonesome, among woods,
At noon and 'mid the calm of summer nights,
When, by the margin of the trembling lake,
Beneath the gloomy hills homeward I went
In solitude, such intercourse was mine ;
Mine was it in the fields both day and night,
And by the waters, all the summer long.

410

420

And in the frosty season, when the sun
Was set, and visible for many a mile
The cottage windows blazed through twilight gloom,
I heeded not their summons : happy time
It was indeed for all of us—for me
It was a time of rapture ! Clear and loud
The village clock tolled six,—I wheeled about,
Proud and exulting like an untired horse
That cares not for his home All shod with steel,
We hissed along the polished ice in games
Confederate, imitative of the chase
And woodland pleasures,—the resounding horn,
The pack loud chiming, and the hunted hare.
So through the darkness and the cold we flew,
And not a voice was idle ; with the din
Smitten, the precipices rang aloud ;
The leafless trees and every icy crag
Tinkled like iron ; while far distant hills

430

440

Into the tumult sent an alien sound
 Of melancholy not unnoticed, while the stars
 Eastward were sparkling clear, and in the west
 The orange sky of evening died away.
 Not seldom from the uproar I retired
 Into a silent bay, or sportively
 Glanced sideway, leaving the tumultuous throng,
 To cut across the reflex of a star 450
 That fled, and, flying still before me, gleamed
 Upon the glassy plain; and oftentimes,
 When we had given our bodies to the wind,
 And all the shadowy banks on either side
 Came sweeping through the darkness, spinning still
 The rapid line of motion, then at once
 Have I, reclining back upon my heels,
 Stopped short; yet still the solitary cliffs
 Wheeled by me—even as if the earth had rolled
 With visible motion her diurnal round! 460
 Behind me did they stretch in solemn train,
 Feebler and feebler, and I stood and watched
 Till all was tranquil as a dreamless sleep.

Ye Presences of Nature in the sky
 And on the earth! Ye Visions of the hills!
 And Souls of lonely places! can I think
 A vulgar hope was yours when ye employed
 Such ministry, when ye, through many a year
 Haunting me thus among my boyish sports,
 On caves and trees, upon the woods and hills, 470
 Impressed upon all forms the characters
 Of danger or desire; and thus did make
 The surface of the universal earth
 With triumph and delight, with hope and fear,
 Work like a sea?

Not uselessly employed,
 Might I pursue this theme through every change
 Of exercise and play, to which the year
 Did summon us in his delightful round.

We were a noisy crew; the sun in heaven
 Beheld not vales more beautiful than ours; 480
 Nor saw a band in happiness and joy
 Richer, or worthier of the ground they trod.
 I could record with no reluctant voice
 The woods of autumn, and their hazel bowers
 With milk-white clusters hung; the rod and line,
 True symbol of hope's foolishness, whose strong

And unreproved enchantment led us on
 By rocks and pools shut out from every star,
 All the green summer, to forlorn cascades
 Among the windings hid of mountain brooks. 490
 —Unfading recollections! at this hour
 The heart is almost mine with which I felt,
 From some hill-top on sunny afternoons,
 The paper kite high among fleecy clouds
 Pull at her rein like an impetuous courser;
 Or, from the meadows sent on gusty days,
 Beheld her breast the wind, then suddenly
 Dashed headlong, and rejected by the storm.

Ye lowly cottages wherein we dwelt,
 A ministration of your own was yours; 500
 Can I forget you, being as you were
 So beautiful among the pleasant fields
 In which ye stood? or can I here forget
 The plain and seemly countenance with which
 Ye dealt out your plain comforts? Yet had ye
 Delights and exultations of your own.
 Eager and never weary we pursued
 Our home-amusements by the warm peat-fire
 At evening, when with pencil, and smooth slate
 In square divisions parcelled out and all 510
 With crosses and with cyphers scribbled o'er,
 We schemed and puzzled, head opposed to head
 In strife too humble to be named in verse:
 Or round the naked table, snow-white deal,
 Cherry or maple, sate in close array,
 And to the combat, Loo or Whist, led on
 A thick-ribbed army; not, as in the world,
 Neglected and ungratefully thrown by
 Even for the very service they had wrought,
 But husbanded through many a long campaign. 520
 Uncouth assemblage was it, where no few
 Had changed their functions; some, plebeian cards
 Which Fate, beyond the promise of their birth,
 Had dignified, and called to represent
 The persons of departed potentates.
 Oh, with what echoes on the board they fell!
 Ironical diamonds,—clubs, hearts, diamonds, spades,
 A congregation piteously akin!
 Cheap matter offered they to boyish wit,
 Those sooty knaves, precipitated down 530
 With scoffs and taunts, like Vulcan out of heaven:
 The paramount ace, a moon in her eclipse,

Queens gleaming through their splendour's last decay,
 And monarchs surly at the wrongs sustained
 By royal visages. Meanwhile abroad
 Incessant rain was falling, or the frost
 Raged bitterly, with keen and silent tooth ;
 And, interrupting oft that eager game,
 From under Esthwaite's splitting fields of ice
 The pent-up air, struggling to free itself, 540
 Gave out to meadow-grounds and hills a loud
 Protracted yelling, like the noise of wolves
 Howling in troops along the Bothnic Main.

Nor, sedulous as I have been to trace
 How Nature by extrinsic passion first
 Peopled the mind with forms sublime or fair,
 And made me love them, may I here omit
 How other pleasures have been mine, and joys
 Of subtler origin ; how I have felt,
 Not seldom even in that tempestuous time, 550
 Those hallowed and pure motions of the sense
 Which seem, in their simplicity, to own
 An intellectual charm ; that calm delight
 Which, if I err not, surely must belong
 To those first-born affinities that fit
 Our new existence to existing things,
 And, in our dawn of being, constitute
 The bond of union between life and joy.

Yes, I remember when the changeful earth,
 And twice five summers, on my mind had stamped 560
 The faces of the moving year, even then
 I held unconscious intercourse with beauty
 Old as creation, drinking in a pure
 Organic pleasure from the silver wreaths
 Of curling mist, or from the level plain
 Of waters coloured by impending clouds.

The sands of Westmoreland, the creeks and bays
 Of Cumbria's rocky limits, they can tell
 How, when the Sea threw off his evening shade,
 And to the shepherd's hut on distant hills 570
 Sent welcome notice of the rising moon,
 How I have stood, to fancies such as these
 A stranger, linking with the spectacle
 No conscious memory of a kindred sight,
 And bringing with me no peculiar sense
 Of quietness or peace ; yet have I stood,

Even while mine eye hath moved o'er many a league
 Of shining water, gathering as it seemed,
 Through every hair-breadth in that field of light,
 New pleasure like a bee among the flowers. 580

Thus oft amid those fits of vulgar joy
 Which, through all seasons, on a child's pursuits
 Are prompt attendants, 'mid that giddy bliss
 Which, like a tempest, works along the blood
 And is forgotten; even then I felt
 Gleams like the flashing of a shield;—the earth
 And common face of Nature spake to me
 Rememberable things; sometimes, 'tis true,
 By chance collisions and quaint accidents
 (Like those ill-sorted unions, work supposed 590
 Of evil-minded fairies), yet not vain
 Nor profitless, if haply they impressed
 Collateral objects and appearances,
 Albeit lifeless then, and doomed to sleep
 Until maturer seasons called them forth
 To imprégnate and to elevate the mind.
 —And if the vulgar joy by its own weight
 Wearied itself out of the memory,
 The scenes which were a witness of that joy
 Remained in their substantial lineaments 600
 Depicted on the brain, and to the eye
 Were visible, a daily sight; and thus
 By the impressive discipline of fear,
 By pleasure and repeated happiness,
 So frequently repeated, and by force
 Of obscure feelings representative
 Of things forgotten, these same scenes so bright,
 So beautiful, so majestic in themselves,
 Though yet the day was distant, did become
 Habitually dear, and all their forms 610
 And changeful colours by invisible links
 Were fastened to the affections.

I began

My story early—not misled, I trust,
 By an infirmity of love for days
 Disowned by memory—ere the breath of spring
 Planting my snowdrops among winter snows:
 Nor will it seem to thee, O Friend! so prompt
 In sympathy, that I have lengthened out
 With fond and feeble tongue a tedious tale.
 Meanwhile, my hope has been, that I might fetch 620
 Invigorating thoughts from former years;

Might fix the wavering balance of my mind,
 And haply meet reproaches too, whose power
 May spur me on, in manhood now mature,
 To honourable toil. Yet should these hopes
 Prove vain, and thus should neither I be taught
 To understand myself, nor thou to know
 With better knowledge how the heart was framed
 Of him thou lovest; need I dread from thee
 Harsh judgments, if the song be loth to quit
 Those recollected hours that have the charm
 Of visionary things, those lovely forms
 And sweet sensations that throw back our life,
 And almost make remotest infancy
 A visible scene, on which the sun is shining?

630

One end at least hath been attained; my mind
 Hath been revived, and if this genial mood
 Desert me not, forthwith shall be brought down
 Through later years the story of my life.
 The road lies plain before me;—'tis a theme
 Single and of determined bounds; and hence
 I choose it rather at this time, than work
 Of ampler or more varied argument,
 Where I might be discomfited and lost:
 And certain hopes are with me, that to thee
 This labour will be welcome, honoured Friend!

640

BOOK SECOND

SCHOOL-TIME—(*continued*)

THUS far, O Friend! have we, though leaving much
 Unvisited, endeavoured to retrace
 The simple ways in which my childhood walked;
 Those chiefly that first led me to the love
 Of rivers, woods, and fields. The passion yet
 Was in its birth, sustained as might befall
 By nourishment that came unsought; for still
 From week to week, from month to month, we lived
 A round of tumult. Duly were our games
 Prolonged in summer till the day-light failed:
 No chair remained before the doors; the bench
 And threshold steps were empty; fast asleep
 The labourer, and the old man who had sate

10

A later lingerer ; yet the revelry
 Continued and the loud uproar : at last,
 When all the ground was dark, and twinkling stars
 Edged the black clouds, home and to bed we went,
 Feverish with weary joints and beating minds.
 Ah ! is there one who ever has been young,
 Nor needs a warning voice to tame the pride 20
 Of intellect and virtue's self-esteem ?
 One is there, though the wisest and the best
 Of all mankind, who covets not at times
 Union that cannot be ;—who would not give,
 If so he might, to duty and to truth
 The eagerness of infantine desire ?
 A tranquillising spirit presses now
 On my corporeal frame, so wide appears
 The vacancy between me and those days
 Which yet have such self-presence in my mind, 30
 That, musing on them, often do I seem
 Two consciousnesses, conscious of myself
 And of some other Being. A rude mass
 Of native rock, left midway in the square
 Of our small market village, was the goal
 Of centre of these sports ; and when, returned
 After long absence, thither I repaired,
 Gone was the old grey stone, and in its place
 A smart Assembly-room usurped the ground
 That had been ours. There let the fiddle scream, 40
 And be ye happy ! Yet, my Friends ! I know
 That more than one of you will think with me
 Of those soft starry nights, and that old Dame
 From whom the stone was named, who there had sate,
 And watched her table with its huckster's wares
 Assiduous, through the length of sixty years.

We ran a boisterous course ; the year span round
 With giddy motion. But the time approached
 That brought with it a regular desire
 For calmer pleasures, when the winning forms 50
 Of Nature were collaterally attached
 To every scheme of holiday delight
 And every boyish sport, less grateful else
 And languidly pursued.

When summer came,
 Our pastime was, on bright half-holidays,
 To sweep along the plain of Windermere
 With rival oars ; and the selected bourne
 Was now an Island musical with birds

That sang and ceased not ; now a Sister Isle
 Beneath the oaks' umbrageous covert, sown 60
 With lilies of the valley like a field ;
 And now a third small Island, where survived
 In solitude the ruins of a shrine
 Once to Our Lady dedicate, and served
 Daily with chaunted rites. In such a race
 So ended, disappointment could be none,
 Uneasiness, or pain, or jealousy :
 We rested in the shade, all pleased alike,
 Conquered and conqueror. Thus the pride of strength,
 And the vain-glory of superior skill, 70
 Were tempered ; thus was gradually produced
 A quiet independence of the heart ;
 And to my Friend who knows me I may add,
 Fearless of blame, that hence for future days
 Ensued a diffidence and modesty,
 And I was taught to feel, perhaps too much,
 The self-sufficing power of Solitude.

Our daily meals were frugal, Sabine fare !
 More than we wished we knew the blessing then
 Of vigorous hunger—hence corporeal strength 80
 Unsapped by delicate viands ; for, exclude
 A little weekly stipend, and we lived
 Through three divisions of the quartered year
 In penniless poverty. But now to school
 From the half-yearly holidays returned,
 We came with weightier purses, that sufficed
 To furnish treats more costly than the Dame
 Of the old grey stone, from her scant board, supplied.
 Hence rustic dinners on the cool green ground,
 Or in the woods, or by a river side 90
 Or shady fountain's, while among the leaves
 Soft airs were stirring, and the mid-day sun
 Unfelt shone brightly round us in our joy.
 Nor is my aim neglected if I tell
 How sometimes, in the length of those half-years,
 We from our funds drew largely ;—proud to curb,
 And eager to spur on, the galloping steed ;
 And with the courteous inn-keeper, whose stud
 Supplied our want, we haply might employ
 Sly subterfuge, if the adventure's bound 100
 Were distant : some famed temple where of yore
 The Druids worshipped, or the antique walls
 Of that large abbey, where within the Vale
 Of Nightshade, to St. Mary's honour built,

Stands yet a mouldering pile with fractured arch,
 Belfry, and images, and living trees;
 A holy scene!—Along the smooth green turf
 Our horses grazed. To more than inland peace
 Left by the west wind sweeping overhead
 From a tumultuous ocean, trees and towers
 In that sequestered valley may be seen,
 Both silent and both motionless alike;
 Such the deep shelter that is there, and such
 The safeguard for repose and quietness.

110

Our steeds remounted and the summons given,
 With whip and spur we through the chauntry flew
 In uncouth race, and left the cross-legged knight,
 And the stone-abbot, and that single wren
 Which one day sang so sweetly in the nave
 Of the old church, that—though from recent showers
 The earth was comfortless, and, touched by faint
 Internal breezes, sobbings of the place
 And respirations, from the roofless walls
 The shuddering ivy dripped large drops—yet still
 So sweetly 'mid the gloom the invisible bird
 Sang to herself, that there I could have made
 My dwelling-place, and lived for ever there
 To hear such music. Through the walls we flew
 And down the valley, and, a circuit made
 In wantonness of heart, through rough and smooth
 We scampered homewards. Oh, ye rocks and streams,
 And that still spirit shed from evening air!
 Even in this joyous time I sometimes felt
 Your presence, when with slackened step we breathed
 Along the sides of the steep hills, or when
 Lighted by gleams of moonlight from the sea
 We beat with thundering hoofs the level sand.

121

130

Midway on long Winander's eastern shore,
 Within the crescent of a pleasant bay,
 A tavern stood; no homely-featured house,
 Primeval like its neighbouring cottages,
 But 'twas a splendid place, the door beset
 With chaises, grooms, and liveries, and within
 Decanters, glasses, and the blood-red wine.
 In ancient times, and ere the Hall was built
 On the large island, had this dwelling been
 More worthy of a poet's love, a hut,
 Proud of its own bright fire and sycamore shade.

140

But—though the rhymes were gone that once inscribed
 The threshold, and large golden characters, 150
 Spread o'er the spangled sign-board, had dislodged
 The old Lion and usurped his place, in slight
 And mockery of the rustic painter's hand—
 Yet, to this hour, the spot to me is dear
 With all its foolish pomp. The garden lay
 Upon a slope surmounted by a plain
 Of a small bowling-green; beneath us stood
 A grove, with gleams of water through the trees
 And over the tree-tops; nor did we want
 Refreshment, strawberries and mellow cream. 160
 There, while through half an afternoon we played
 On the smooth platform, whether skill prevailed
 Or happy blunder triumphed, bursts of glee
 Made all the mountains ring. But, ere night-fall,
 When in our pinnace we returned at leisure
 Over the shadowy lake, and to the beach
 Of some small island steered our course with one,
 The Minstrel of the Troop, and left him there,
 And rowed off gently, while he blew his flute
 Alone upon the rock—oh, then, the calm 170
 And dead still water lay upon my mind
 Even with a weight of pleasure, and the sky,
 Never before so beautiful, sank down
 Into my heart, and held me like a dream!
 Thus were my sympathies enlarged, and thus
 Daily the common range of visible things
 Grew dear to me: already I began
 To love the sun; a boy I loved the sun,
 Not as I since have loved him, as a pledge
 And surety of our earthly life, a light 180
 Which we behold and feel we are alive;
 Nor for his bounty to so many worlds—
 But for this cause, that I had seen him lay
 His beauty on the morning hills, had seen
 The western mountain touch his setting orb,
 In many a thoughtless hour, when, from excess
 Of happiness, my blood appeared to flow
 For its own pleasure, and I breathed with joy.
 And, from like feelings, humble though intense,
 To patriotic and domestic love 190
 Analogous, the moon to me was dear;
 For I could dream away my purposes,
 Standing to gaze upon her while she hung
 Midway between the hills, as if she knew
 No other region, but belonged to thee,

Yea, appertained by a peculiar right
To thee and thy grey huts, thou one dear Vale!

Those incidental charms which first attached
My heart to rural objects, day by day
Grew weaker, and I hasten on to tell 200
How Nature, intervenient till this time
And secondary, now at length was sought
For her own sake. But who shall parcel out
His intellect by geometric rules,
Split like a province into round and square?
Who knows the individual hour in which
His habits were first sown, even as a seed?
Who that shall point as with a wand and say
'This portion of the river of my mind
Came from yon fountain'? Thou, my Friend! art one
More deeply read in thy own thoughts; to thee 211
Science appears but what in truth she is,
Not as our glory and our absolute boast,
But as a succedaneum, and a prop
To our infirmity. No officious slave
Art thou of that false secondary power
By which we multiply distinctions, then
Deem that our puny boundaries are things
That we perceive, and not that we have made.
To thee, unblinded by these formal arts, 220
The unity of all hath been revealed,
And thou wilt doubt, with me less aptly skilled
Than many are to range the faculties
In scale and order, class the cabinet
Of their sensations, and in voluble phrase
Run through the history and birth of each
As of a single independent thing.
Hard task, vain hope, to analyse the mind,
If each most obvious and particular thought,
Not in a mystical and idle sense, 230
But in the words of Reason deeply weighed,
Hath no beginning.

Blest the infant Babe,
(For with my best conjecture I would trace
Our Being's earthly progress,) blest the Babe,
Nursed in his Mother's arms, who sinks to sleep,
Rocked on his Mother's breast; who with his soul
Drinks in the feelings of his Mother's eye!
For him, in one dear Presence, there exists
A virtue which irradiates and exalts
Objects through widest intercourse of sense. 240

No outcast he, bewildered and depressed :
 Along his infant veins are interfused
 The gravitation and the filial bond
 Of nature that connect him with the world.
 Is there a flower, to which he points with hand
 Too weak to gather it, already love
 Drawn from love's purest earthly fount for him
 Hath beautified that flower ; already shades
 Of pity cast from inward tenderness
 Do fall around him upon aught that bears
 Unsightly marks of violence or harm.
 Emphatically such a Being lives,
 Frail creature as he is, helpless as frail,
 An inmate of this active universe :
 For feeling has to him imparted power
 That through the growing faculties of sense
 Doth like an agent of the one great Mind
 Create, creator and receiver both,
 Working but in alliance with the works
 Which it beholds.—Such, verily, is the first
 Poetic spirit of our human life,
 By uniform control of after years,
 In most, abated or suppressed ; in some,
 Through every change of growth and of decay,
 Pre-eminent till death.

250

260

From early days,
 Beginning not long after that first time
 In which, a Babe, by intercourse of touch
 I held mute dialogues with my Mother's heart,
 I have endeavoured to display the means
 Whereby this infant sensibility,
 Great birthright of our being, was in me
 Augmented and sustained. Yet is a path
 More difficult before me ; and I fear
 That in its broken windings we shall need
 The chamois' sinews, and the eagle's wing :
 For now a trouble came into my mind
 From unknown causes. I was left alone
 Seeking the visible world, nor knowing why.
 The props of my affections were removed,
 And yet the building stood, as if sustained
 By its own spirit ! All that I beheld
 Was dear, and hence to finer influxes
 The mind lay open, to a more exact
 And close communion. Many are our joys
 In youth, but oh ! what happiness to live
 When every hour brings palpable access

270

280

Of knowledge, when all knowledge is delight,
 And sorrow is not there ! The seasons came,
 And every season wheresoe'er I moved
 Unfolded transitory qualities, 290
 Which, but for this most watchful power of love,
 Had been neglected ; left a register
 Of permanent relations, else unknown.
 Hence life, and change, and beauty, solitude
 More active even than 'best society'—
 Society made sweet as solitude
 By silent inobtrusive sympathies,
 And gentle agitations of the mind
 From manifold distinctions, difference
 Perceived in things, where, to the unwatchful eye, 300
 No difference is, and hence, from the same source,
 Sublimar joy ; for I would walk alone,
 Under the quiet stars, and at that time
 Have felt whate'er there is of power in sound
 To breathe an elevated mood, by form
 Or image unprofaned ; and I would stand,
 If the night blackened with a coming storm,
 Beneath some rock, listening to notes that are
 The ghostly language of the ancient earth,
 Or make their dim abode in distant winds. 310
 Thence did I drink the visionary power ;
 And deem not profitless those fleeting moods
 Of shadowy exultation : not for this,
 That they are kindred to our purer mind
 And intellectual life ; but that the soul,
 Remembering how she felt, but what she felt
 Remembering not, retains an obscure sense
 Of possible sublimity, whereto
 With growing faculties she doth aspire,
 With faculties still growing, feeling still 320
 That whatsoever point they gain, they yet
 Have something to pursue.

And not alone,
 'Mid gloom and tumult, but no less 'mid fair
 And tranquil scenes, that universal power
 And fitness in the latent qualities
 And essences of things, by which the mind
 Is moved with feelings of delight, to me
 Came strengthened with a superadded soul,
 A virtue not its own. My morning walks
 Were early ;—oft before the hours of school 330
 I travelled round our little lake, five miles
 Of pleasant wandering. Happy time ! more dear

For this, that one was by my side, a Friend,
 Then passionately loved ; with heart how full
 Would he peruse these lines ! For many years
 Have since flowed in between us, and, our minds
 Both silent to each other, at this time
 We live as if those hours had never been.
 Nor seldom did I lift our cottage latch
 Far earlier, ere one smoke-wreath had risen 340
 From human dwelling, or the vernal thrush
 Was audible ; and sate among the woods
 Alone upon some jutting eminence,
 At the first gleam of dawn-light, when the Vale,
 Yet slumbering, lay in utter solitude.
 How shall I seek the origin ? where find
 Faith in the marvellous things which then I felt ?
 Oft in these moments such a holy calm
 Would overspread my soul, that bodily eyes
 Were utterly forgotten, and what I saw 350
 Appeared like something in myself, a dream,
 A prospect in the mind.

'Twere long to tell
 What spring and autumn, what the winter snows,
 And what the summer shade, what day and night,
 Evening and morning, sleep and waking, thought
 From sources inexhaustible, poured forth
 To feed the spirit of religious love
 In which I walked with Nature. But let this
 Be not forgotten, that I still retained
 My first creative sensibility ; 360
 That by the regular action of the world
 My soul was unsubdued. A plastic power
 Abode with me ; a forming hand, at times
 Rebellious, acting in a devious mood ;
 A local spirit of his own, at war
 With general tendency, but, for the most,
 Subservient strictly to external things
 With which it communed. An auxiliar light
 Came from my mind, which on the setting sun
 Bestowed new splendour ; the melodious birds, 370
 The fluttering breezes, fountains that run on
 Murmuring so sweetly in themselves, obeyed
 A like dominion, and the midnight storm
 Grew darker in the presence of my eye :
 Hence my obeisance, my devotion hence,
 And hence my transport.

Nor should this, perchance,
 Pass unrecorded, that I still had loved

The exercise and produce of a toil,
 Than analytic industry to me
 More pleasing, and whose character I deem 380
 Is more poetic as resembling more
 Creative agency. The song would speak
 Of that interminable building reared
 By observation of affinities
 In objects where no brotherhood exists
 To passive minds. My seventeenth year was come ;
 And, whether from this habit rooted now
 So deeply in my mind, or from excess
 In the great social principle of life
 Coercing all things into sympathy, 390
 To unorganic natures were transferred
 My own enjoyments ; or the power of truth
 Coming in revelation, did converse
 With things that really are ; I, at this time,
 Saw blessings spread around me like a sea.
 Thus while the days flew by, and years passed on,
 From Nature and her overflowing soul
 I had received so much, that all my thoughts
 Were steeped in feeling ; I was only then
 Contented, when with bliss ineffable 400
 I felt the sentiment of Being spread
 O'er all that moves and all that seemeth still ;
 O'er all that, lost beyond the reach of thought
 And human knowledge, to the human eye
 Invisible, yet liveth to the heart ;
 O'er all that leaps and runs, and shouts and sings,
 Or beats the gladsome air ; o'er all that glides
 Beneath the wave, yea, in the wave itself,
 And mighty depth of waters. Wonder not
 If high the transport, great the joy I felt, 410
 Communing in this sort through earth and heaven
 With every form of creature, as it looked
 Towards the Uncreated with a countenance
 Of adoration, with an eye of love.
 One song they sang, and it was audible,
 Most audible, then, when the fleshly ear,
 O'ercome by humblest prelude of that strain,
 Forgot her functions, and slept undisturbed.

If this be error, and another faith
 Find easier access to the pious mind, 420
 Yet were I grossly destitute of all
 Those human sentiments that make this earth
 So dear, if I should fail with grateful voice

To speak of you, ye mountains, and ye lakes
 And sounding cataracts, ye mists and winds
 That dwell among the hills where I was born.
 If in my youth I have been pure in heart,
 If, mingling with the world, I am content
 With my own modest pleasures, and have lived
 With God and Nature communing, removed 430
 From little enmities and low desires,
 The gift is yours; if in these times of fear,
 This melancholy waste of hopes o'erthrown,
 If, 'mid indifference and apathy,
 And wicked exultation when good men
 On every side fall off, we know not how,
 To selfishness, disguised in gentle names
 Of peace and quiet and domestic love,
 Yet mingled not unwillingly with sneers
 On visionary minds; if, in this time 440
 Of dereliction and dismay, I yet
 Despair not of our nature, but retain
 A more than Roman confidence, a faith
 That fails not, in all sorrow my support,
 The blessing of my life; the gift is yours,
 Ye winds and sounding cataracts! 'tis yours,
 Ye mountains! thine, O Nature! Thou hast fed
 My lofty speculations; and in thee,
 For this uneasy heart of ours, I find
 A never-failing principle of joy 450
 And purest passion.

Thou, my Friend! wert reared
 In the great city, 'mid far other scenes;
 But we, by different roads, at length have gained
 The self-same bourne. And for this cause to thee
 I speak, unapprehensive of contempt,
 The insinuated scoff of coward tongues,
 And all that silent language which so oft
 In conversation between man and man
 Blots from the human countenance all trace
 Of beauty and of love. For thou hast sought 460
 The truth in solitude, and, since the days
 That gave thee liberty, full long desired,
 To serve in Nature's temple, thou hast been
 The most assiduous of her ministers;
 In many things my brother, chiefly here
 In this our deep devotion.

Fare thee well!
 Health and the quiet of a healthful mind
 Attend thee! seeking oft the haunts of men,

And yet more often living with thyself,
 And for thyself, so haply shall thy days
 Be many, and a blessing to mankind. 470

BOOK THIRD

RESIDENCE AT CAMBRIDGE

IT was a dreary morning when the wheels
 Rolled over a wide plain o'erhung with clouds,
 And nothing cheered our way till first we saw
 The long-roofed chapel of King's College lift
 Turrets and pinnacles in answering files,
 Extended high above a dusky grove.

Advancing, we espied upon the road
 A student clothed in gown and tasselled cap,
 Striding along as if o'ertasked by Time,
 Or covetous of exercise and air; 10
 He passed—nor was I master of my eyes
 Till he was left an arrow's flight behind.
 As near and nearer to the spot we drew,
 It seemed to suck us in with an eddy's force.
 Onward we drove beneath the Castle; caught,
 While crossing Magdalene Bridge, a glimpse of Cam;
 And at the *Hoop* alighted, famous Inn.

My spirit was up, my thoughts were full of hope;
 Some friends I had, acquaintances who there
 Seemed friends, poor simple schoolboys, now hung
 round 20

With honour and importance: in a world
 Of welcome faces up and down I roved;
 Questions, directions, warnings and advice,
 Flowed in upon me, from all sides; fresh day
 Of pride and pleasure! to myself I seemed
 A man of business and expense, and went
 From shop to shop about my own affairs,
 To Tutor or to Tailor, as befell,
 From street to street with loose and careless mind.

I was the Dreamer, they the Dream; I roamed 30
 Delighted through the motley spectacle;
 Gowns grave, or gaudy, doctors, students, streets,
 Courts, cloisters, flocks of churches, gateways, towers:

Migration strange for a stripling of the hills,
A northern villager.

As if the change
Had waited on some Fairy's wand, at once
Behold me rich in monies, and attired
In splendid garb, with hose of silk, and hair
Powdered like rimy trees, when frost is keen.
My lordly dressing-gown, I pass it by,
With other signs of manhood that supplied
The lack of beard.—The weeks went roundly on,
With invitations, suppers, wine and fruit,
Smooth housekeeping within, and all without
Liberal, and suiting gentleman's array.

40

The Evangelist St. John my patron was:
Three Gothic courts are his, and in the first
Was my abiding-place, a nook obscure;
Right underneath, the College kitchens made
A humming sound, less tuneable than bees,
But hardly less industrious; with shrill notes
Of sharp command and scolding intermixed.
Near me hung Trinity's loquacious clock,
Who never let the quarters, night or day,
Slip by him unproclaimed, and told the hours
Twice over with a male and female voice.
Her pealing organ was my neighbour too;
And from my pillow, looking forth by light
Of moon or favouring stars, I could behold
The antechapel where the statue stood
Of Newton with his prism and silent face,
The marble index of a mind for ever
Voyaging through strange seas of Thought, alone.

50

60

Of College labours, of the Lecturer's room
All studded round, as thick as chairs could stand,
With loyal students faithful to their books,
Half-and-half idlers, hardy recusants,
And honest dunces—of important days,
Examinations, when the man was weighed
As in a balance! of excessive hopes,
Tremblings withal and commendable fears,
Small jealousies, and triumphs good or bad—
Let others that know more speak as they know.
Such glory was but little sought by me,
And little won. Yet from the first crude days
Of settling time in this untried abode,
I was disturbed at times by prudent thoughts,

70

Wishing to hope without a hope, some fears
 About my future worldly maintenance,
 And, more than all, a strangeness in the mind, 80
 A feeling that I was not for that hour,
 Nor for that place. But wherefore be cast down?
 For (not to speak of Reason and her pure
 Reflective acts to fix the moral law
 Deep in the conscience, nor of Christian Hope,
 Bowing her head before her sister Faith
 As one far mightier), hither I had come,
 Bear witness Truth, endowed with holy powers
 And faculties, whether to work or feel.
 Oft when the dazzling show no longer new 90
 Had ceased to dazzle, oftentimes did I quit
 My comrades, leave the crowd, buildings and groves,
 And as I paced alone the level fields
 Far from those lovely sights and sounds sublime
 With which I had been conversant, the mind
 Drooped not; but there into herself returning,
 With prompt rebound seemed fresh as heretofore.
 At least I more distinctly recognised
 Her native instincts: let me dare to speak
 A higher language, say that now I felt 100
 What independent solaces were mine,
 To mitigate the injurious sway of place
 Or circumstance, how far soever changed
 In youth, or to be changed in after years.
 As if awakened, summoned, roused, constrained,
 I looked for universal things; perused
 The common countenance of earth and sky:
 Earth, nowhere unembellished by some trace
 Of that first Paradise whence man was driven;
 And sky, whose beauty and bounty are expressed 110
 By the proud name she bears—the name of Heaven.
 I called on both to teach me what they might;
 Or turning the mind in upon herself,
 Pored, watched, expected, listened, spread my thoughts
 And spread them with a wider creeping; felt
 Incumbencies more awful, visitings
 Of the Upholder of the tranquil soul,
 That tolerates the indignities of Time,
 And, from the centre of Eternity
 All finite motions overruling, lives 120
 In glory immutable. But peace! enough
 Here to record that I was mounting now
 To such community with highest truth—
 A track pursuing, not untrod before,

From strict analogies by thought supplied
 Or consciousnesses not to be subdued.
 To every natural form, rock, fruit, or flower,
 Even the loose stones that cover the highway,
 I gave a moral life : I saw them feel,
 Or linked them to some feeling : the great mass 130
 Lay bedded in a quickening soul, and all
 That I beheld respired with inward meaning.
 Add that whate'er of Terror or of Love
 Or Beauty, Nature's daily face put on
 From transitory passion, unto this
 I was as sensitive as waters are
 To the sky's influence in a kindred mood
 Of passion ; was obedient as a lute
 That waits upon the touches of the wind.
 Unknown, unthought of, yet I was most rich— 140
 I had a world about me—'twas my own ;
 I made it, for it only lived to me,
 And to the God who sees into the heart.
 Such sympathies, though rarely, were betrayed
 By outward gestures and by visible looks :
 Some called it madness—so indeed it was,
 If child-like fruitfulness in passing joy,
 If steady moods of thoughtfulness matured
 To inspiration, sort with such a name ;
 If prophecy be madness ; if things viewed 150
 By poets in old time, and higher up
 By the first men, earth's first inhabitants,
 May in these tutored days no more be seen
 With undisordered sight. But leaving this,
 It was no madness, for the bodily eye
 Amid my strongest workings evermore
 Was searching out the lines of difference
 As they lie hid in all external forms,
 Near or remote, minute or vast ; an eye
 Which, from a tree, a stone, a withered leaf, 160
 To the broad ocean and the azure heavens
 Spangled with kindred multitudes of stars,
 Could find no surface where its power might sleep ;
 Which spake perpetual logic to my soul,
 And by an unrelenting agency
 Did bind my feelings even as in a chain.

And here, O Friend ! have I retraced my life
 Up to an eminence, and told a tale
 Of matters which not falsely may be called
 The glory of my youth. Of genius, power, 170

Creation and divinity itself

I have been speaking, for my theme has been
 What passed within me. Not of outward things
 Done visibly for other minds, words, signs,
 Symbols or actions, but of my own heart
 Have I been speaking, and my youthful mind.
 O Heavens! how awful is the might of souls,
 And what they do within themselves while yet
 The yoke of earth is new to them, the world
 Nothing but a wild field where they were sown. 180
 This is, in truth, heroic argument,
 This genuine prowess, which I wished to touch
 With hand however weak, but in the main
 It lies far hidden from the reach of words.
 Points have we all of us within our souls
 Where all stand single; this I feel, and make
 Breathings for incommunicable powers;
 But is not each a memory to himself?—
 And, therefore, now that we must quit this theme,
 I am not heartless, for there's not a man 190
 That lives who hath not known his godlike hours,
 And feels not what an empire we inherit
 As natural beings in the strength of Nature.

No more: for now into a populous plain
 We must descend. A Traveller I am,
 Whose tale is only of himself; even so,
 So be it, if the pure of heart be prompt
 To follow, and if thou, my honoured Friend!
 Who in these thoughts art ever at my side,
 Support, as heretofore, my fainting steps. 200

It hath been told, that when the first delight
 That flashed upon me from this novel show
 Had failed, the mind returned into herself;
 Yet true it is, that I had made a change
 In climate, and my nature's outward coat
 Changed also slowly and insensibly.
 Full oft the quiet and exalted thoughts
 Of loneliness gave way to empty noise
 And superficial pastimes; now and then
 Forced labour, and more frequently forced hopes; 210
 And, worst of all, a treasonable growth
 Of indecisive judgments, that impaired
 And shook the mind's simplicity.—And yet
 This was a gladsome time. Could I behold—
 Who, less insensible than sodden clay

In a sea-river's bed at ebb of tide,
 Could have beheld,—with undelighted heart,
 So many happy youths, so wide and fair
 A congregation in its budding-time
 Of health, and hope, and beauty, all at once 220
 So many divers samples from the growth
 Of life's sweet season—could have seen unmoved
 That miscellaneous garland of wild flowers
 Decking the matron temples of a place
 So famous through the world? To me, at least,
 It was a goodly prospect: for, in sooth,
 Though I had learnt betimes to stand unpropped,
 And independent musings pleased me so
 That spells seemed on me when I was alone,
 Yet could I only cleave to solitude 230
 In lonely places; if a throng was near
 That way I leaned by nature; for my heart
 Was social, and loved idleness and joy.

Not seeking those who might participate
 My deeper pleasures (nay, I had not once,
 Though not unused to mutter lonesome songs,
 Even with myself divided such delight,
 Or looked that way for aught that might be clothed
 In human language), easily I passed
 From the remembrances of better things, 240
 And slipped into the ordinary works
 Of careless youth, unburdened, unalarmed
Caverns there were within my mind which sun
 Could never penetrate, yet did there not
 Want store of leafy *arbours* where the light
 Might enter in at will. Companionships,
 Friendships, acquaintances, were welcome all.
 We sauntered, played, or rioted; we talked
 Unprofitable talk at morning hours;
 Drifted about along the streets and walks, 250
 Read lazily in trivial books, went forth
 To gallop through the country in blind zeal
 Of senseless horsemanship, or on the breast
 Of Cam sailed boisterously, and let the stars
 Come forth, perhaps without one quiet thought.

Such was the tenour of the second act
 In this new life. Imagination slept,
 And yet not utterly. I could not print
 Ground where the grass had yielded to the steps
 Of generations of illustrious men, 260

Unmoved. I could not always lightly pass
 Through the same gateways, sleep where they had
 slept,
 Wake where they waked, range that inclosure old,
 That garden of great intellects, undisturbed.
 Place also by the side of this dark sense
 Of noble feeling, that those spiritual men,
 Even the great Newton's own ethereal self,
 Seemed humbled in these precincts thence to be
 The more endeared. Their several memories here
 (Even like their persons in their portraits clothed 270
 With the accustomed garb of daily life)
 Put on a lowly and a touching grace
 Of more distinct humanity, that left
 All genuine admiration unimpaired.

Beside the pleasant Mill of Trompington
 I laughed with Chaucer in the hawthorn shade ;
 Heard him, while birds were warbling, tell his tales
 Of amorous passion. And that gentle Bard,
 Chosen by the Muses for their Page of State—
 Sweet Spenser, moving through his clouded heaven 280
 With the moon's beauty and the moon's soft pace,
 I called him Brother, Englishman, and Friend !
 Yea, our blind Poet, who, in his later day,
 Stood almost single ; uttering odious truth—
 Darkness before, and danger's voice behind,
 Soul awful—if the earth has ever lodged
 An awful soul—I seemed to see him here
 Familiarly, and in his scholar's dress
 Bounding before me, yet a stripling youth—
 A boy, no better, with his rosy cheeks 290
 Angelical, keen eye, courageous look,
 And conscious step of purity and pride.
 Among the band of my compeers was one
 Whom chance had stationed in the very room
 Honoured by Milton's name. O temperate Bard !
 Be it confest that, for the first time, seated
 Within thy innocent lodge and oratory,
 One of a festive circle, I poured out
 Libations, to thy memory drank, till pride
 And gratitude grew dizzy in a brain 300
 Never excited by the fumes of wine
 Before that hour, or since. Then, forth I ran
 From the assembly ; through a length of streets,
 Ran, ostrich-like, to reach our chapel door
 In not a desperate or opprobrious time,

Albeit long after the importunate bell
 Had stopped, with wearisome Cassandra voice
 No longer haunting the dark winter night.
 Call back, O Friend ! a moment to thy mind,
 The place itself and fashion of the rites. 310
 With careless ostentation shouldering up
 My surplice, through the inferior throng I clove
 Of the plain Burghers, who in audience stood
 On the last skirts of their permitted ground,
 Under the pealing organ. Empty thoughts !
 I am ashamed of them : and that great Bard,
 And thou, O Friend ! who in thy ample mind
 Hast placed me high above my best deserts,
 Ye will forgive the weakness of that hour,
 In some of its unworthy vanities, 320
 Brother to many more.

In this mixed sort
 The months passed on, remissly, not given up
 To wilful alienation from the right,
 Or walks of open scandal, but in vague
 And loose indifference, easy likings, aims
 Of a low pitch—duty and zeal dismissed,
 Yet Nature, or a happy course of things
 Not doing in their stead the needful work.
 The memory languidly revolved, the heart
 Reposed in noontide rest, the inner pulse 330
 Of contemplation almost failed to beat.
 Such life might not inaptly be compared
 To a floating island, an amphibious spot
 Unsound, of spongy texture, yet withal
 Not wanting a fair face of water-weeds
 And pleasant flowers. The thirst of living praise,
 Fit reverence for the glorious Dead, the sight
 Of those long vistas, sacred catacombs,
 Where mighty *minds* lie visibly entombed,
 Have often stirred the heart of youth, and bred 340
 A fervent love of rigorous discipline.—
 Alas ! such high emotion touched not me.
 Look was there none within these walls to shame
 My easy spirits, and discountenance
 Their light composure, far less to instil
 A calm resolve of mind, firmly addressed
 To puissant efforts. Nor was this the blame
 Of others but my own ; I should, in truth,
 As far as doth concern my single self,
 Misdeem most widely, lodging it elsewhere : 350
 For I, bred up 'mid Nature's luxuries,

Was a spoiled child, and, rambling like the wind,
As I had done in daily intercourse
With those crystalline rivers, solemn heights,
And mountains, ranging like a fowl of the air,
I was ill-tutored for captivity ;
To quit my pleasure, and, from month to month,
Take up a station calmly on the perch
Of sedentary peace. Those lovely forms
Had also left less space within my mind, 360
Which, wrought upon instinctively, had found
A freshness in those objects of her love,
A winning power, beyond all other power.
Not that I slighted books,—that were to lack
All sense,—but other passions in me ruled,
Passions more fervent, making me less prompt
To in-door study than was wise or well,
Or suited to those years. Yet I, though used
In magisterial liberty to rove,
Culling such flowers of learning as might tempt 370
A random choice, could shadow forth a place
(If now I yield not to a flattering dream)
Whose studious aspect should have bent me down
To instantaneous service ; should at once
Have made me pay to science and to arts
And written lore, acknowledged my liege lord,
A homage frankly offered up, like that
Which I had paid to Nature. Toil and pains
In this recess, by thoughtful Fancy built,
Should spread from heart to heart ; and stately groves,
Majestic edifices, should not want 381
A corresponding dignity within.
The congregating temper that pervades
Our unripe years, not wasted, should be taught
To minister to works of high attempt—
Works which the enthusiast would perform with love.
Youth should be awed, religiously possessed
With a conviction of the power that waits
On knowledge, when sincerely sought and prized
For its own sake, on glory and on praise 390
If but by labour won, and fit to endure
The passing day ; should learn to put aside
Her trappings here, should strip them off abashed
Before antiquity and steadfast truth
And strong book-mindedness ; and over all
A healthy sound simplicity should reign,
A seemly plainness, name it what you will,
Republican or pious.

If these thoughts

Are a gratuitous emblazonry
 That mocks the recreant age *we* live in, then 400
 Be Folly and False-seeming free to affect
 Whatever formal gait of discipline
 Shall raise them highest in their own esteem—
 Let them parade among the Schools at will,
 But spare the House of God. Was ever known
 The witless shepherd who persists to drive
 A flock that thirsts not to a pool disliked?
 A weight must surely hang on days begun
 And ended with such mockery. Be wise,
 Ye Presidents and Deans, and, till the spirit 410
 Of ancient times revive, and youth be trained
 At home in pious service, to your bells
 Give seasonable rest, for 'tis a sound
 Hollow as ever vexed the tranquil air;
 And your officious doings bring disgrace
 On the plain steeples of our English Church,
 Whose worship, 'mid remotest village trees,
 Suffers for this. Even Science, too, at hand
 In daily sight of this irreverence,
 Is smitten thence with an unnatural taint, 420
 Loses her just authority, falls beneath
 Collateral suspicion, else unknown.
 This truth escaped me not, and I confess,
 That having 'mid my native hills given loose
 To a schoolboy's vision, I had raised a pile
 Upon the basis of the coming time,
 That fell in ruins round me. Oh, what joy
 To see a sanctuary for our country's youth
 Informed with such a spirit as might be
 Its own protection; a primeval grove, 430
 Where, though the shades with cheerfulness were filled,
 Nor indigent of songs warbled from crowds
 In under-coverts, yet the countenance
 Of the whole place should bear a stamp of awe;
 A habitation sober and demure
 For ruminating creatures; a domain
 For quiet things to wander in; a haunt
 In which the heron should delight to feed
 By the shy rivers, and the pelican
 Upon the cypress spire in lonely thought 440
 Might sit and sun himself.—Alas! alas!
 In vain for such solemnity I looked;
 Mine eyes were crossed by butterflies, ears vexed
 By chattering popinjays; the inner heart

Seemed trivial, and the impresses without
Of a too gaudy region.

Different sight

Those venerable Doctors saw of old,
When all who dwelt within these famous walls
Led in abstemiousness a studious life ;
When, in forlorn and naked chambers cooped 450
And crowded, o'er the ponderous books they hung
Like caterpillars eating out their way
In silence, or with keen devouring noise
Not to be tracked or fathered. Princes then
At matins froze, and couched at curfew-time,
Trained up through piety and zeal to prize
Spare diet, patient labour, and plain weeds.
O seat of Arts ! renowned throughout the world !
Far different service in those homely days
The Muses' modest nurslings underwent 460
From their first childhood : in that glorious time
When Learning, like a stranger come from far,
Sounding through Christian lands her trumpet, roused
Peasant and king ; when boys and youths, the growth
Of ragged villages and crazy huts,
Forsook their homes, and, errant in the quest
Of Patron, famous school or friendly nook,
Where, pensioned, they in shelter might sit down,
From town to town and through wide scattered realms
Journeyed with ponderous folios in their hands ; 470
And often, starting from some covert place,
Saluted the chance comer on the road,
Crying ' An obolus, a penny give
To a poor scholar ! '—when illustrious men,
Lovers of truth, by penury constrained,
Bucer, Erasmus, or Melancthon, read
Before the doors or windows of their cells
By moonshine through mere lack of taper light.

But peace to vain regrets ! We see but darkly
Even when we look behind us, and best things 480
Are not so pure by nature that they needs
Must keep to all, as fondly all believe,
Their highest promise. If the mariner,
When at reluctant distance he hath passed
Some tempting island, could but know the ills
That must have fallen upon him had he brought
His bark to land upon the wished-for shore,
Good cause would oft be his to thank the surf
Whose white belt scared him thence, or wind that blew

Inexorably adverse : for myself
 I grieve not ; happy is the gownèd youth,
 Who only misses what I missed, who falls
 No lower than I fell.

490

I did not love,
 Judging not ill perhaps, the timid course
 Of our scholastic studies ; could have wished
 To see the river flow with ampler range
 And freer pace ; but more, far more, I grieved
 To see displayed among an eager few,
 Who in the field of contest persevered,
 Passions unworthy of youth's generous heart
 And mounting spirit, pitiably repaid,
 When so disturbed, whatever palms are won.
 From these I turned to travel with the shoal
 Of more unthinking natures, easy minds
 And pillowy ; yet not wanting love that makes
 The day pass lightly on, when foresight sleeps,
 And wisdom and the pledges interchanged
 With our own inner being are forgot.

500

Yet was this deep vacation not given up
 To utter waste. Hitherto I had stood
 In my own mind remote from social life,
 (At least from what we commonly so name,)
 Like a lone shepherd on a promontory
 Who lacking occupation looks far forth
 Into the boundless sea, and rather makes
 Than finds what he beholds. And sure it is,
 That this first transit from the smooth delights
 And wild outlandish walks of simple youth
 To something that resembles an approach
 Towards human business, to a privileged world
 Within a world, a midway residence
 With all its intervenient imagery,
 Did better suit my visionary mind,
 Far better, than to have been bolted forth,
 Thrust out abruptly into Fortune's way
 Among the conflicts of substantial life ;
 By a more just gradation did lead on
 To higher things ; more naturally matured,
 For permanent possession, better fruits,
 Whether of truth or virtue, to ensue.
 In serious mood, but oftener, I confess,
 With playful zest of fancy, did we note
 (How could we less ?) the manners and the ways
 Of those who lived distinguished by the badge

510

520

530

Of good or ill report ; or those with whom
 By frame of Academic discipline
 We were perforce connected, men whose sway
 And known authority of office served
 To set our minds on edge, and did no more.
 Nor wanted we rich pastime of this kind, 540
 Found everywhere, but chiefly in the ring
 Of the grave Elders, men unscoured, grotesque
 In character, tricked out like aged trees
 Which through the lapse of their infirmity
 Give ready place to any random seed
 That chooses to be reared upon their trunks.

Here on my view, confronting vividly
 Those shepherd swains whom I had lately left,
 Appeared a different aspect of old age ;
 How different ! yet both distinctly marked, 550
 Objects embossed to catch the general eye,
 Or portraitures for special use designed,
 As some might seem, so aptly do they serve
 To illustrate Nature's book of rudiments—
 That book upheld as with maternal care
 When she would enter on her tender scheme
 Of teaching comprehension with delight,
 And mingling playful with pathetic thoughts.

The surfaces of artificial life
 And manners finely wrought, the delicate race 560
 Of colours, lurking, gleaming up and down
 Through that state arras woven with silk and gold ;
 This wily interchange of snaky hues,
 Willingly or unwillingly revealed,
 I neither knew nor cared for ; and as such
 Were wanting here, I took what might be found
 Of less elaborate fabric. At this day
 I smile, in many a mountain solitude
 Conjuring up scenes as obsolete in freaks
 Of character, in points of wit as broad, 570
 As aught by wooden images performed
 For entertainment of the gaping crowd
 At wake or fair. And oftentimes do flit
 Remembrances before me of old men—
 Old humourists, who have been long in their graves,
 And having almost in my mind put off
 Their human names, have into phantoms passed
 Of texture midway between life and books.

I play the loiterer: 'tis enough to note
 That here in dwarf proportions were expressed 580
 The limbs of the great world; its eager strifes
 Collaterally pourtrayed, as in mock fight,
 A tournament of blows, some hardly dealt
 Though short of mortal combat; and whate'er
 Might in this pageant be supposed to hit
 An artless rustic's notice, this way less,
 More that way, was not wasted upon me—
 And yet the spectacle may well demand
 A more substantial name, no mimic show,
 Itself a living part of a live whole, 590
 A creek in the vast sea; for, all degrees
 And shapes of spurious fame and short-lived praise
 Here sate in state, and fed with daily alms
 Retainers won away from solid good;
 And here was Labour, his own bond-slave; Hope,
 That never set the pains against the prize;
 Idleness halting with his weary clog,
 And poor misguided Shame, and witless Fear,
 And simple Pleasure foraging for Death;
 Honour misplaced, and Dignity astray; 600
 Feuds, factions, flatteries, enmity, and guile
 Murmuring submission, and bald government,
 (The idol weak as the idolater),
 And Decency and Custom starving Truth,
 And blind Authority beating with his staff
 The child that might have led him; Emptiness
 Followed as of good omen, and meek Worth
 Left to herself unheard of and unknown.

Of these and other kindred notices
 I cannot say what portion is in truth 610
 The naked recollection of that time,
 And what may rather have been called to life
 By after-meditation. But delight
 That, in an easy temper lulled asleep,
 Is still with Innocence its own reward,
 This was not wanting. Carelessly I roamed
 As through a wide museum from whose stores
 A casual rarity is singled out
 And has its brief perusal, then gives way
 To others, all supplanted in their turn; 620
 Till 'mid this crowded neighbourhood of things
 That are by nature most unneighbourly,
 The head turns round and cannot right itself;
 And though an aching and a barren sense

Of gay confusion still be uppermost,
 With few wise longings and but little love,
 Yet to the memory something cleaves at last,
 Whence profit may be drawn in times to come.

Thus in submissive idleness, my Friend !
 The labouring time of autumn, winter, spring,
 Eight months ! rolled pleasingly away ; the ninth
 Came and returned me to my native hills.

630

BOOK FOURTH

SUMMER VACATION

BRIGHT was the summer's noon when quickening
 steps

Followed each other till a dreary moor
 Was crossed, a bare ridge clomb, upon whose top
 Standing alone, as from a rampart's edge,
 I overlooked the bed of Windermere,
 Like a vast river, stretching in the sun.
 With exultation, at my feet I saw
 Lake, islands, promontories, gleaming bays,
 A universe of Nature's fairest forms
 Proudly revealed with instantaneous burst, 10
 Magnificent, and beautiful, and gay.
 I bounded down the hill shouting amain
 For the old Ferryman ; to the shout the rocks
 Replied, and when the Charon of the flood
 Had staid his oars, and touched the jutting pier,
 I did not step into the well-known boat
 Without a cordial greeting. Thence with speed
 Up the familiar hill I took my way
 Towards that sweet Valley where I had been reared ;
 'Twas but a short hour's walk, ere veering round 20
 I saw the snow-white church upon her hill
 Sit like a thronèd Lady, sending out
 A gracious look all over her domain.
 Yon azure smoke betrays the lurking town ;
 With eager footsteps I advance and reach
 The cottage threshold where my journey closed.
 Glad welcome had I, with some tears, perhaps,
 From my old Dame, so kind and motherly,
 While she perused me with a parent's pride.
 The thoughts of gratitude shall fall like dew 30

Upon thy grave, good creature ! While my heart
 Can beat never will I forget thy name.
 Heaven's blessing be upon thee where thou liest
 After thy innocent and busy stir
 In narrow cares, thy little daily growth
 Of calm enjoyments, after eighty years,
 And more than eighty, of untroubled life,
 Childless, yet by the strangers to thy blood
 Honoured with little less than filial love.
 What joy was mine to see thee once again, 40
 Thee and thy dwelling, and a crowd of things
 About its narrow precincts, all beloved,
 And many of them seeming yet my own !
 Why should I speak of what a thousand hearts
 Have felt, and every man alive can guess ?
 The rooms, the court, the garden were not left
 Long unsaluted, nor the sunny seat
 Round the stone table under the dark pine,
 Friendly to studious or to festive hours ;
 Nor that unruly child of mountain birth, 50
 The famous brook, who, soon as he was boxed
 Within our garden, found himself at once,
 As if by trick insidious and unkind,
 Stripped of his voice and left to dimple down
 (Without an effort and without a will)
 A channel paved by man's officious care.
 I looked at him and smiled, and smiled again,
 And in the press of twenty thousand thoughts,
 ' Ha,' quoth I, ' pretty prisoner, are you there !'
 Well might sarcastic Fancy then have whispered, 60
 ' An emblem here behold of thy own life ;
 In its late course of even days with all
 Their smooth enthrallment ' ; but the heart was full,
 Too full for that reproach. My aged Dame
 Walked proudly at my side : she guided me ;
 I willing, nay—nay, wishing to be led.
 —The face of every neighbour whom I met
 Was like a volume to me ; some were hailed
 Upon the road, some busy at their work,
 Unceremonious greetings interchanged 70
 With half the length of a long field between.
 Among my schoolfellows I scattered round
 Like recognitions, but with some constraint
 Attended, doubtless, with a little pride,
 But with more shame, for my habiliments,
 The transformation wrought by gay attire.
 Not less delighted did I take my place

At our domestic table : and, dear Friend !
 In this endeavour simply to relate
 A Poet's history, may I leave untold 80
 The thankfulness with which I laid me down
 In my accustomed bed, more welcome now
 Perhaps than if it had been more desired
 Or been more often thought of with regret?—
 That lowly bed whence I had heard the wind
 Roar, and the rain beat hard ; where I so oft
 Had lain awake on summer nights to watch
 The moon in splendour couched among the leaves
 Of a tall ash, that near our cottage stood ;
 Had watched her with fixed eyes while to and fro 90
 In the dark summit of the waving tree
 She rocked with every impulse of the breeze.

Among the favourites whom it pleased me well
 To see again, was one by ancient right
 Our inmate, a rough terrier of the hills ;
 By birth and call of nature pre-ordained
 To hunt the badger and unearth the fox
 Among the impervious crags, but having been
 From youth our own adopted, he had passed
 Into a gentler service. And when first 100
 The boyish spirit flagged, and day by day
 Along my veins I kindled with the stir,
 The fermentation, and the vernal heat
 Of poesy, affecting private shades
 Like a sick Lover, then this dog was used
 To watch me, an attendant and a friend,
 Obsequious to my steps early and late,
 Though often of such dilatory walk
 Tired, and uneasy at the halts I made.
 A hundred times when, roving high and low, 110
 I have been harassed with the toil of verse,
 Much pains and little progress, and at once
 Some lovely Image in the song rose up
 Full-formed, like Venus rising from the sea ;
 Then have I darted forwards to let loose
 My hand upon his back with stormy joy,
 Caressing him again and yet again.
 And when at evening on the public way
 I sauntered, like a river murmuring
 And talking to itself when all things else
 Are still, the creature trotted on before ; 120
 Such was his custom ; but whene'er he met
 A passenger approaching, he would turn

To give me timely notice, and straightway,
 Grateful for that admonishment, I hushed
 My voice, composed my gait, and, with the air
 And mien of one whose thoughts are free, advanced
 To give and take a greeting that might save
 My name from piteous rumours, such as wait
 On men suspected to be crazed in brain.

130

Those walks well worthy to be prized and loved—
 Regretted!—that word, too, was on my tongue,
 But they were richly laden with all good,
 And cannot be remembered but with thanks
 And gratitude, and perfect joy of heart—
 Those walks in all their freshness now came back
 Like a returning Spring. When first I made
 Once more the circuit of our little lake,
 If ever happiness hath lodged with man,
 That day consummate happiness was mine,
 Wide-spreading, steady, calm, contemplative.
 The sun was set, or setting, when I left
 Our cottage door, and evening soon brought on
 A sober hour, not winning or serene,
 For cold and raw the air was, and untuned;
 But as a face we love is sweetest then
 When sorrow damps it, or, whatever look
 It chance to wear, is sweetest if the heart
 Have fulness in herself; even so with me
 It fared that evening. Gently did my soul
 Put off her veil, and, self-transmuted, stood
 Naked, as in the presence of her God.
 While on I walked, a comfort seemed to touch
 A heart that had not been disconsolate:
 Strength came where weakness was not known to be,
 At least not felt; and restoration came
 Like an intruder knocking at the door
 Of unacknowledged weariness. I took
 The balance, and with firm hand weighed myself.
 —Of that external scene which round me lay,
 Little, in this abstraction, did I see;
 Remembered less; but I had inward hopes
 And swellings of the spirit, was rapt and soothed,
 Conversed with promises, had glimmering views
 How life pervades the undecaying mind;
 How the immortal soul with God-like power
 Informs, creates, and thaws the deepest sleep
 That time can lay upon her; how on earth
 Man, if he do but live within the light

140

150

160

Of high endeavours, daily spreads abroad
His being armed with strength that cannot fail.
Nor was there want of milder thoughts, of love,
Of innocence, and holiday repose ;
And more than pastoral quiet, 'mid the stir
Of boldest projects, and a peaceful end
At last, or glorious, by endurance won.
Thus musing, in a wood I sate me down
Alone, continuing there to muse : the slopes
And heights meanwhile were slowly overspread
With darkness, and before a rippling breeze 180
The long lake lengthened out its hoary line,
And in the sheltered coppice where I sate,
Around me from among the hazel leaves,
Now here, now there, moved by the straggling wind,
Came ever and anon a breath-like sound,
Quick as the pantings of the faithful dog,
The off and on companion of my walk ;
And such, at times, believing them to be,
I turned my head to look if he were there ;
Then into solemn thought I passed once more. 190

A freshness also found I at this time
In human Life, the daily life of those
Whose occupations really I loved ;
The peaceful scene oft filled me with surprise,
Changed like a garden in the heat of spring
After an eight-days' absence. For (to omit
The things which were the same and yet appeared
Far otherwise) amid this rural solitude,
A narrow Vale where each was known to all,
'Twas not indifferent to a youthful mind 200
To mark some sheltering bower or sunny nook,
Where an old man had used to sit alone,
Now vacant ; pale-faced babes whom I had left
In arms, now rosy prattlers at the feet
Of a pleased grandame tottering up and down ;
And growing girls whose beauty, filched away
With all its pleasant promises, was gone
To deck some slighted playmate's homely cheek.

Yes, I had something of a subtler sense,
And often looking round was moved to smiles
Such as a delicate work of humour breeds ;
I read, without design, the opinions, thoughts,
Of those plain-living people now observed
With clearer knowledge ; with another eye 210

I saw the quiet woodman in the woods,
 The shepherd roam the hills. With new delight,
 This chiefly, did I note my grey-haired Dame ;
 Saw her go forth to church or other work
 Of state, equipped in monumental trim ;
 Short velvet cloak, (her bonnet of the like), 220
 A mantle such as Spanish Cavaliers
 Wore in old time. Her smooth domestic life,
 Affectionate without disquietude,
 Her talk, her business, pleased me ; and no less
 Her clear though shallow stream of piety
 That ran on Sabbath days a fresher course ;
 With thoughts unfelt till now I saw her read
 Her Bible on hot Sunday afternoons,
 And loved the book, when she had dropped asleep
 And made of it a pillow for her head. 230

Nor less do I remember to have felt,
 Distinctly manifested at this time,
 A human-heartedness about my love
 For objects hitherto the absolute wealth
 Of my own private being and no more ;
 Which I had loved, even as a blessed spirit
 Or Angel, if he were to dwell on earth,
 Might love in individual happiness.
 But now there opened on me other thoughts
 Of change, congratulation or regret, 240
 A pensive feeling ! It spread far and wide ;
 The trees, the mountains shared it, and the brooks,
 The stars of Heaven, now seen in their old haunts—
 White Sirius glittering o'er the southern crags,
 Orion with his belt, and those fair Seven,
 Acquaintances of every little child,
 And Jupiter, my own beloved star !
 Whatever shadings of mortality,
 Whatever imports from the world of death
 Had come among these objects heretofore, 250
 Were, in the main, of mood less tender : strong,
 Deep, gloomy were they, and severe ; the scatterings
 Of awe and tremulous dread, that had given way
 In later youth to yearnings of a love
 Enthusiastic, to delight and hope.

As one who hangs down-bending from the side
 Of a slow-moving boat, upon the breast
 Of a still water, solacing himself
 With such discoveries as his eye can make

Beneath him in the bottom of the deep, 260
 Sees many beauteous sights—weeds, fishes, flowers,
 Grotts, pebbles, roots of trees, and fancies more,
 Yet often is perplexed and cannot part
 The shadow from the substance, rocks and sky,
 Mountains and clouds, reflected in the depth
 Of the clear flood, from things which there abide
 In their true dwelling; now is crossed by gleam
 Of his own image, by a sunbeam now,
 And wavering motions sent he knows not whence,
 Impediments that make his task more sweet; 270
 Such pleasant office have we long pursued
 Incumbent o'er the surface of past time
 With like success, nor often have appeared
 Shapes fairer or less doubtfully discerned
 Than these to which the Tale, indulgent Friend!
 Would now direct thy notice. Yet in spite
 Of pleasure won, and knowledge not withheld,
 There was an inner falling off—I loved,
 Loved deeply all that had been loved before,
 More deeply even than ever: but a swarm 280
 Of heady schemes jostling each other, gawds,
 And feast and dance, and public revelry,
 And sports and games (too grateful in themselves,
 Yet in themselves less grateful, I believe,
 Than as they were a badge glossy and fresh
 Of manliness and freedom) all conspired
 To lure my mind from firm habitual quest
 Of feeding pleasures, to depress the zeal
 And damp those yearnings which had once been mine—
 A wild, unworldly-minded youth, given up 290
 To his own eager thoughts. It would demand
 Some skill, and longer time than may be spared,
 To paint these vanities, and how they wrought
 In haunts where they, till now, had been unknown.
 It seemed the very garments that I wore
 Preyed on my strength, and stopped the quiet stream
 Of self-forgetfulness.

Yes, that heartless chase
 Of trivial pleasures was a poor exchange
 For books and nature at that early age.
 'Tis true, some casual knowledge might be gained 300
 Of character or life; but, at that time,
 Of manners put to school I took small note,
 And all my deeper passions lay elsewhere.
 Far better had it been to exalt the mind
 By solitary study, to uphold

Intense desire through meditative peace ;
 And yet, for chastisement of these regrets,
 The memory of one particular hour
 Doth here rise up against me. 'Mid a throng
 Of maids and youths, old men, and matrons staid, 310
 A medley of all tempers, I had passed
 The night in dancing, gaiety, and mirth,
 With din of instruments and shuffling feet,
 And glancing forms, and tapers glittering,
 And unaimed prattle flying up and down ;
 Spirits upon the stretch, and here and there
 Slight shocks of young love-liking interspersed,
 Whose transient pleasure mounted to the head,
 And tingled through the veins. Ere we retired,
 The cock had crowed, and now the eastern sky 320
 Was kindling, not unseen, from humble copse
 And open field, through which the pathway wound,
 And homeward led my steps. Magnificent
 The morning rose, in memorable pomp,
 Glorious as e'er I had beheld—in front,
 The sea lay laughing at a distance ; near,
 The solid mountains shone, bright as the clouds,
 Grain-tinctured, drenched in empyrean light ;
 And in the meadows and the lower grounds
 Was all the sweetness of a common dawn— 330
 Dews, vapours, and the melody of birds,
 And labourers going forth to till the fields.
 Ah ! need I say, dear Friend ! that to the brim
 My heart was full ; I made no vows, but vows
 Were then made for me ; bond unknown to me
 Was given, that I should be, else sinning greatly,
 A dedicated Spirit. On I walked
 In thankful blessedness, which yet survives.

Strange rendezvous ! My mind was at that time
 A parti-coloured show of grave and gay, 340
 Solid and light, short-sighted and profound ;
 Of inconsiderate habits and sedate,
 Consorting in one mansion unproved.
 The worth I knew of powers that I possessed,
 Though slighted and too oft misused. Besides,
 That summer, swarming as it did with thoughts
 Transient and idle, lacked not intervals
 When Folly from the frown of fleeting Time
 Shrunk, and the mind experienced in herself
 Conformity as just as that of old
 To the end and written spirit of God's works, 350

Whether held forth in Nature or in Man,
Through pregnant vision, separate or conjoined.

When from our better selves we have too long
Been parted by the hurrying world, and droop,
Sick of its business, of its pleasures tired,
How gracious, how benign, is Solitude ;
How potent a mere image of her sway ;
Most potent when impressed upon the mind
With an appropriate human centre—hermit, 360
Deep in the bosom of the wilderness ;
Votary (in vast cathedral, where no foot
Is treading, where no other face is seen)
Kneeling at prayers ; or watchman on the top
Of lighthouse, beaten by Atlantic waves ;
Or as the soul of that great Power is met
Sometimes embodied on a public road,
When, for the night deserted, it assumes
A character of quiet more profound
Than pathless wastes.

Once, when those summer months
Were flown, and autumn brought its annual show 371
Of oars with oars contending, sails with sails,
Upon Winander's spacious breast, it chanced
That—after I had left a flower-decked room
(Whose in-door pastime, lighted up, survived
To a late hour), and spirits overwrought
Were making night do penance for a day
Spent in a round of strenuous idleness—
My homeward course led up a long ascent,
Where the road's watery surface, to the top 380
Of that sharp rising, glittered to the moon
And bore the semblance of another stream
Stealing with silent lapse to join the brook
That murmured in the vale. All else was still ;
No living thing appeared in earth or air,
And, save the flowing water's peaceful voice,
Sound there was none—but, lo ! an uncouth shape,
Shown by a sudden turning of the road,
So near that, slipping back into the shade
Of a thick hawthorn, I could mark him well, 390
Myself unseen. He was of stature tall,
A span above man's common measure, tall,
Stiff, lank, and upright ; a more meagre man
Was never seen before by night or day.
Long were his arms, pallid his hands ; his mouth
Looked ghastly in the moonlight : from behind,

A mile-stone propped him ; I could also ken
 That he was clothed in military garb,
 Though faded, yet entire. Companionless,
 No dog attending, by no staff sustained, 400
 He stood, and in his very dress appeared
 A desolation, a simplicity,
 To which the trappings of a gaudy world
 Make a strange back-ground. From his lips, ere long,
 Issued low muttered sounds, as if of pain
 Or some uneasy thought ; yet still his form
 Kept the same awful steadiness—at his feet
 His shadow lay, and moved not. From self-blame
 Not wholly free, I watched him thus ; at length
 Subduing my heart's specious cowardice, 410
 I left the shady nook where I had stood
 And hailed him. Slowly from his resting-place
 He rose, and with a lean and wasted arm
 In measured gesture lifted to his head
 Returned my salutation ; then resumed
 His station as before ; and when I asked
 His history, the veteran, in reply,
 Was neither slow nor eager ; but, unmoved,
 And with a quiet uncomplaining voice,
 A stately air of mild indifference, 420
 He told in few plain words a soldier's tale—
 That in the Tropic Islands he had served,
 Whence he had landed scarcely three weeks past ;
 That on his landing he had been dismissed,
 And now was travelling towards his native home.
 This heard, I said, in pity, ' Come with me.'
 He stooped, and straightway from the ground took up
 An oaken staff by me yet unobserved—
 A staff which must have dropt from his slack hand
 And lay till now neglected in the grass. 430
 Though weak his step and cautious, he appeared
 To travel without pain, and I beheld,
 With an astonishment but ill suppressed,
 His ghostly figure moving at my side ;
 Nor could I, while we journeyed thus, forbear
 To turn from present hardships to the past,
 And speak of war, battle, and pestilence,
 Sprinkling this talk with questions, better spared,
 On what he might himself have seen or felt.
 He all the while was in demeanour calm, 440
 Concise in answer ; solemn and sublime
 He might have seemed, but that in all he said
 There was a strange half-absence, as of one

Knowing too well the importance of his theme,
 But feeling it no longer. Our discourse
 Soon ended, and together on we passed
 In silence through a wood gloomy and still.
 Up-turning, then, along an open field,
 We reached a cottage. At the door I knocked,
 And earnestly to charitable care 450
 Commended him as a poor friendless man,
 Belated and by sickness overcome.
 Assured that now the traveller would repose
 In comfort, I entreated that henceforth
 He would not linger in the public ways,
 But ask for timely furtherance and help
 Such as his state required. At this reproof,
 With the same ghastly mildness in his look,
 He said, 'My trust is in the God of Heaven,
 And in the eye of him who passes me!' 460

The cottage door was speedily unbarred,
 And now the soldier touched his hat once more
 With his lean hand, and in a faltering voice,
 Whose tone bespoke reviving interests
 Till then unfelt, he thanked me; I returned
 The farewell blessing of the patient man,
 And so we parted. Back I cast a look,
 And lingered near the door a little space,
 Then sought with quiet heart my distant home.

BOOK FIFTH

BOOKS

WHEN Contemplation, like the night-calm felt
 Through earth and sky, spreads widely, and
 sends deep
 Into the soul its tranquillising power,
 Even then I sometimes grieve for thee, O Man,
 Earth's paramount Creature! not so much for woes
 That thou endurest; heavy though that weight be,
 Cloud-like it mounts, or touched with light divine
 Doth melt away; but for those palms achieved,
 Through length of time, by patient exercise
 Of study and hard thought; there, there, it is 10
 That sadness finds its fuel. Hitherto,

In progress through this Verse, my mind hath looked
 Upon the speaking face of earth and heaven
 As her prime teacher, intercourse with man
 Established by the sovereign Intellect,
 Who through that bodily image hath diffused,
 As might appear to the eye of fleeting time,
 A deathless spirit. Thou also, man! hast wrought,
 For commerce of thy nature with herself,
 Things that aspire to unconquerable life; 20
 And yet we feel—we cannot choose but feel—
 That they must perish. Tremblings of the heart
 It gives, to think that our immortal being
 No more shall need such garments; and yet man,
 As long as he shall be the child of earth,
 Might almost 'weep to have' what he may lose,
 Nor be himself extinguished, but survive,
 Abject, depressed, forlorn, disconsolate.
 A thought is with me sometimes, and I say,—
 Should the whole frame of earth by inward throes 30
 Be wrenched, or fire come down from far to scorch
 Her pleasant habitations, and dry up
 Old Ocean, in his bed left singed and bare,
 Yet would the living Presence still subsist
 Victorious, and composure would ensue,
 And kindlings like the morning—presage sure
 Of day returning and of life revived.
 But all the meditations of mankind,
 Yea, all the adamantine holds of truth
 By reason built, or passion, which itself 40
 Is highest reason in a soul sublime;
 The consecrated works of Bard and Sage,
 Sensuous or intellectual, wrought by men,
 Twin labourers and heirs of the same hopes;
 Where would they be? Oh! why hath not the Mind
 Some element to stamp her image on
 In nature somewhat nearer to her own?
 Why, gifted with such powers to send abroad
 Her spirit, must it lodge in shrines so frail?

One day, when from my lips a like complaint 50
 Had fallen in presence of a studious friend,
 He with a smile made answer, that in truth
 'Twas going far to seek disquietude;
 But on the front of his reproof confessed
 That he himself had oftentimes given way
 To kindred hauntings. Whereupon I told,
 That once in the stillness of a summer's noon,

While I was seated in a rocky cave
 By the sea-side, perusing, so it chanced,
 The famous history of the errant knight 60
 Recorded by Cervantes, these same thoughts
 Beset me, and to height unusual rose,
 While listlessly I sate, and, having closed
 The book, had turned my eyes toward the wide sea.
 On poetry and geometric truth,
 And their high privilege of lasting life,
 From all internal injury exempt,
 I mused ; upon these chiefly : and at length,
 My senses yielding to the sultry air,
 Sleep seized me, and I passed into a dream. 70
 I saw before me stretched a boundless plain
 Of sandy wilderness, all black and void,
 And as I looked around, distress and fear
 Came creeping over me, when at my side,
 Close at my side, an uncouth shape appeared
 Upon a dromedary, mounted high.
 He seemed an Arab of the Bedouin tribes :
 A lance he bore, and underneath one arm
 A stone, and in the opposite hand a shell 80
 Of a surpassing brightness. At the sight
 Much I rejoiced, not doubting but a guide
 Was present, one who with unerring skill
 Would through the desert lead me ; and while yet
 I looked and looked, self-questioned what this freight
 Which the new-comer carried through the waste
 Could mean, the Arab told me that the stone
 (To give it in the language of the dream)
 Was 'Euclid's Elements' ; and 'This,' said he,
 'Is something of more worth' ; and at the word 90
 Stretched forth the shell, so beautiful in shape,
 In colour so resplendent, with command
 That I should hold it to my ear. I did so,
 And heard that instant in an unknown tongue,
 Which yet I understood, articulate sounds,
 A loud prophetic blast of harmony ;
 An Ode, in passion uttered, which foretold
 Destruction to the children of the earth
 By deluge, now at hand. No sooner ceased
 The song, than the Arab with calm look declared
 That all would come to pass of which the voice 100
 Had given forewarning, and that he himself
 Was going then to bury those two books :
 The one that held acquaintance with the stars,
 And wedded soul to soul in purest bond

Of reason, undisturbed by space or time ;
 The other that was a god, yea many gods,
 Had voices more than all the winds, with power
 To exhilarate the spirit, and to soothe,
 Through every clime, the heart of human kind.
 While this was uttering, strange as it may seem, 110
 I wondered not, although I plainly saw
 The one to be a stone, the other a shell ;
 Nor doubted once but that they both were books,
 Having a perfect faith in all that passed.
 Far stronger, now, grew the desire I felt
 To cleave unto this man ; but when I prayed
 To share his enterprise, he hurried on
 Reckless of me : I followed, not unseen,
 For oftentimes he cast a backward look,
 Grasping his twofold treasure.—Lance in rest, 120
 He rode, I keeping pace with him ; and now
 He, to my fancy, had become the knight
 Whose tale Cervantes tells ; yet not the knight,
 But was an Arab of the desert too ;
 Of these was neither, and was both at once.
 His countenance, meanwhile, grew more disturbed ;
 And, looking backwards when he looked, mine eyes
 Saw, over half the wilderness diffused,
 A bed of glittering light : I asked the cause :
 ‘ It is,’ said he, ‘ the waters of the deep 130
 Gathering upon us ’ ; quickening then the pace
 Of the unwieldy creature he bestrode,
 He left me : I called after him aloud ;
 He heeded not ; but, with his twofold charge
 Still in his grasp, before me, full in view,
 Went hurrying o’er the illimitable waste,
 With the fleet waters of a drowning world
 In chase of him ; whereat I waked in terror,
 And saw the sea before me, and the book,
 In which I had been reading, at my side. 140

Full often, taking from the world of sleep
 This Arab phantom, which I thus beheld,
 This semi-Quixote, I to him have given
 A substance, fancied him a living man,
 A gentle dweller in the desert, crazed
 By love and feeling, and internal thought
 Protracted among endless solitudes ;
 Have shaped him wandering upon this quest !
 Nor have I pitied him ; but rather felt
 Reverence was due to a being thus employed ; 150

And thought that, in the blind and awful lair
 Of such a madness, reason did lie couched.
 Enow there are on earth to take in charge
 Their wives, their children, and their virgin loves,
 Or whatsoever else the heart holds dear ;
 Enow to stir for these ; yea, will I say,
 Contemplating in soberness the approach
 Of an event so dire, by signs in earth
 Or heaven made manifest, that I could share
 That maniac's fond anxiety, and go 160
 Upon like errand. Oftentimes at least
 Me hath such strong entrancement overcome,
 When I have held a volume in my hand,
 Poor earthly casket of immortal verse,
 Shakespeare, or Milton, labourers divine !

Great and benign, indeed, must be the power
 Of living nature, which could thus so long
 Detain me from the best of other guides
 And dearest helpers, left unthanked, unpraised.
 Even in the time of lisping infancy, 170
 And later down, in prattling childhood even,
 While I was travelling back among those days,
 How could I ever play an ingrate's part ?
 Once more should I have made those bowers resound,
 By intermingling strains of thankfulness
 With their own thoughtless melodies ; at least
 It might have well beseeemed me to repeat
 Some simply fashioned tale, to tell again,
 In slender accents of sweet verse, some tale 180
 That did bewitch me then, and soothes me now.
 O Friend ! O Poet ! brother of my soul,
 Think not that I could pass along untouched
 By these remembrances. Yet wherefore speak ?
 Why call upon a few weak words to say
 What is already written in the hearts
 Of all that breathe ?—what in the path of all
 Drops daily from the tongue of every child,
 Wherever man is found ? The trickling tear
 Upon the cheek of listening Infancy
 Proclaims it, and the insuperable look 190
 That drinks as if it never could be full.

That portion of my story I shall leave
 There registered : whatever else of power
 Or pleasure sown, or fostered thus, may be
 Peculiar to myself, let that remain

Where still it works, though hidden from all search
 Among the depths of time. Yet is it just
 That here, in memory of all books which lay
 Their sure foundations in the heart of man,
 Whether by native prose, or numerous verse, 200
 That in the name of all inspired souls—
 From Homer the great Thunderer, from the voice
 That roars along the bed of Jewish song,
 And that more varied and elaborate,
 Those trumpet-tones of harmony that shake
 Our shores in England,—from those loftiest notes
 Down to the low and wren-like warblings, made
 For cottagers and spinners at the wheel,
 And sun-burnt travellers resting their tired limbs,
 Stretched under wayside hedge-rows, ballad tunes, 210
 Food for the hungry ears of little ones,
 And of old men who have survived their joys—
 'Tis just that in behalf of these, the works,
 And of the men that framed them, whether known,
 Or sleeping nameless in their scattered graves,
 That I should here assert their rights, attest
 Their honours, and should, once for all, pronounce
 Their benediction; speak of them as Powers
 For ever to be hallowed; only less,
 For what we are and what we may become, 220
 Than Nature's self, which is the breath of God,
 Or His pure Word by miracle revealed.

Rarely and with reluctance would I stoop
 To transitory themes; yet I rejoice,
 And, by these thoughts admonished, will pour out
 Thanks with uplifted heart, that I was reared
 Safe from an evil which these days have laid
 Upon the children of the land, a pest
 That might have dried me up, body and soul.
 This verse is dedicate to Nature's self, 230
 And things that teach as Nature teaches: then,
 Oh! where had been the Man, the Poet where,
 Where had we been, we two, beloved Friend!
 If in the season of unperilous choice,
 In lieu of wandering, as we did, through vales
 Rich with indigenous produce, open ground
 Of Fancy, happy pastures ranged at will,
 We had been followed, hourly watched, and noosed,
 Each in his several melancholy walk
 Stringed like a poor man's heifer at its feed, 240
 Led through the lanes in forlorn servitude;

Or rather like a stalled ox debarred
From touch of growing grass, that may not taste
A flower till it have yielded up its sweets
A prelibation to the mower's scythe.

Behold the parent hen amid her brood,
Though fledged and feathered, and well pleased to part
And straggle from her presence, still a brood,
And she herself from the maternal bond
Still undischarged ; yet doth she little more 250
Than move with them in tenderness and love,
A centre to the circle which they make ;
And now and then, alike from need of theirs
And call of her own natural appetites,
She scratches, ransacks up the earth for food,
Which they partake at pleasure. Early died
My honoured Mother, she who was the heart
And hinge of all our learnings and our loves :
She left us destitute, and, as we might,
Trooping together. Little suits it me 260
To break upon the sabbath of her rest
With any thought that looks at others' blame ;
Nor would I praise her but in perfect love.
Hence am I checked : but let me boldly say,
In gratitude, and for the sake of truth,
Unheard by her, that she, not falsely taught,
Fetching her goodness rather from times past,
Than shaping novelties for times to come,
Had no presumption, no such jealousy,
Nor did by habit of her thoughts mistrust 270
Our nature, but had virtual faith that He
Who fills the mother's breast with innocent milk,
Doth also for our nobler part provide,
Under His great correction and control,
As innocent instincts, and as innocent food ;
Or draws for minds that are left free to trust
In the simplicities of opening life
Sweet honey out of spurned or dreaded weeds.
This was her creed, and therefore she was pure
From anxious fear of error or mishap, 280
And evil, overweeningly so called ;
Was not puffed up by false unnatural hopes,
Nor selfish with unnecessary cares,
Nor with impatience from the season asked
More than its timely produce ; rather loved
The hours for what they are, than from regard
Glanced on their promises in restless pride.

Such was she—not from faculties more strong
 Than others have, but from the times, perhaps,
 And spot in which she lived, and through a grace 290
 Of modest meekness, simple-mindedness,
 A heart that found benignity and hope,
 Being itself benign.

My drift I fear
 Is scarcely obvious; but, that common sense
 May try this modern system by its fruits,
 Leave let me take to place before her sight
 A specimen pourtrayed with faithful hand.
 Full early trained to worship seemliness,
 This model of a child is never known
 To mix in quarrels; that were far beneath 300
 Its dignity; with gifts he bubbles o'er
 As generous as a fountain; selfishness
 May not come near him, nor the little throng
 Of flitting pleasures tempt him from his path;
 The wandering beggars propagate his name,
 Dumb creatures find him tender as a nun,
 And natural or supernatural fear,
 Unless it leap upon him in a dream,
 Touches him not. To enhance the wonder, see
 How arch his notices, how nice his sense 310
 Of the ridiculous; not blind is he
 To the broad follies of the licensed world,
 Yet innocent himself withal, though shrewd,
 And can read lectures upon innocence;
 A miracle of scientific lore,
 Ships he can guide across the pathless sea,
 And tell you all their cunning; he can read
 The inside of the earth, and spell the stars;
 He knows the policies of foreign lands;
 Can string you names of districts, cities, towns, 320
 The whole world over, tight as beads of dew
 Upon a gossamer thread; he sifts, he weighs;
 All things are put to question; he must live
 Knowing that he grows wiser every day
 Or else not live at all, and seeing too
 Each little drop of wisdom as it falls
 Into the dimpling cistern of his heart!
 For this unnatural growth the trainer blame,
 Pity the tree.—Poor human vanity,
 Wert thou extinguished, little would be left 330
 Which he could truly love; but how escape?
 For, ever as a thought of purer birth
 Rises to lead him toward a better clime,

Some intermeddler still is on the watch
 To drive him back, and pound him, like a stray,
 Within the pinfold of his own conceit.
 Meanwhile old grandame earth is grieved to find
 The playthings, which her love designed for him,
 Unthought of: in their woodland beds the flowers
 Weep, and the river sides are all forlorn. 340
 Oh! give us once again the wishing-cap
 Of Fortunatus, and the invisible coat
 Of Jack the Giant-killer, Robin Hood,
 And Sabra in the forest with St. George!
 The child, whose love is here, at least, doth reap
 One precious gain, that he forgets himself.

These mighty workmen of our later age,
 Who, with a broad highway, have overbridged
 The froward chaos of futurity,
 Tamed to their bidding; they who have the skill 350
 To manage books, and things, and make them act
 On infant minds as surely as the sun
 Deals with a flower; the keepers of our time,
 The guides and wardens of our faculties,
 Sages who in their prescience would control
 All accidents, and to the very road
 Which they have fashioned would confine us down,
 Like engines; when will their presumption learn,
 That in the unreasoning progress of the world
 A wiser spirit is at work for us, 360
 A better eye than theirs, most prodigal
 Of blessings, and most studious of our good,
 Even in what seem our most unfruitful hours?

There was a Boy; ye knew him well, ye cliffs
 And islands of Winander!—many a time
 At evening, when the earliest stars began
 To move along the edges of the hills,
 Rising or setting, would he stand alone
 Beneath the trees or by the glimmering lake,
 And there, with fingers interwoven, both hands 370
 Pressed closely palm to palm, and to his mouth
 Uplifted, he, as through an instrument,
 Blew mimic hootings to the silent owls,
 That they might answer him; and they would shout
 Across the watery vale, and shout again,
 Responsive to his call, with quivering peals,
 And long halloos and screams, and echoes loud,
 Redoubled and redoubled, concourse wild
 Of jocund din; and, when a lengthened pause

Of silence came and baffled his best skill,
 Then sometimes, in that silence while he hung
 Listening, a gentle shock of mild surprise
 Has carried far into his heart the voice
 Of mountain torrents; or the visible scene
 Would enter unawares into his mind,
 With all its solemn imagery, its rocks,
 Its woods, and that uncertain heaven, received
 Into the bosom of the steady lake.

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This Boy was taken from his mates, and died
 In childhood, ere he was full twelve years old.
 Fair is the spot, most beautiful the vale
 Where he was born; the grassy churchyard hangs
 Upon a slope above the village school,
 And through that churchyard when my way has led
 On summer evenings, I believe that there
 A long half hour together I have stood
 Mute, looking at the grave in which he lies!
 Even now appears before the mind's clear eye
 That self-same village church; I see her sit
 (The thronèd Lady whom erewhile we hailed)
 On her green hill, forgetful of this Boy
 Who slumbers at her feet,—forgetful, too,
 Of all her silent neighbourhood of graves,
 And listening only to the gladsome sounds
 That, from the rural school ascending, play
 Beneath her and about her. May she long
 Behold a race of young ones like to those
 With whom I herded!—(easily, indeed,
 We might have fed upon a fatter soil
 Of arts and letters—but be that forgiven)—
 A race of real children; not too wise,
 Too learned, or too good; but wanton, fresh,
 And bandied up and down by love and hate;
 Not unresentful where self-justified;
 Fierce, moody, patient, venturous, modest, shy;
 Mad at their sports like withered leaves in winds;
 Though doing wrong and suffering, and full oft
 Bending beneath our life's mysterious weight
 Of pain, and doubt, and fear, yet yielding not
 In happiness to the happiest upon earth.
 Simplicity in habit, truth in speech,
 Be these the daily strengtheners of their minds;
 May books and Nature be their early joy!
 And knowledge, rightly honoured with that name—
 Knowledge not purchased by the loss of power!

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Well do I call to mind the very week
 When I was first intrusted to the care
 Of that sweet Valley; when its paths, its shores,
 And brooks were like a dream of novelty
 To my half-infant thoughts; that very week, 430
 While I was roving up and down alone,
 Seeking I knew not what, I chanced to cross
 One of those open fields, which, shaped like ears,
 Make green peninsulas on Esthwaite's Lake:
 Twilight was coming on, yet through the gloom
 Appeared distinctly on the opposite shore
 A heap of garments, as if left by one
 Who might have there been bathing. Long I watched,
 But no one owned them; meanwhile the calm lake
 Grew dark with all the shadows on its breast, 440
 And, now and then, a fish up-leaping snapped
 The breathless stillness. The succeeding day,
 Those unclaimed garments telling a plain tale
 Drew to the spot an anxious crowd; some looked
 In passive expectation from the shore,
 While from a boat others hung o'er the deep,
 Sounding with grappling irons and long poles.
 At last, the dead man, 'mid that beauteous scene
 Of trees and hills and water, bolt upright
 Rose, with his ghastly face, a spectre shape 450
 Of terror; yet no soul-debasing fear,
 Young as I was, a child not nine years old,
 Possessed me, for my inner eye had seen
 Such sights before, among the shining streams
 Of faëry land, the forest of romance.
 Their spirit hallowed the sad spectacle
 With decoration of ideal grace;
 A dignity, a smoothness, like the works
 Of Grecian art, and purest poesy.

A precious treasure had I long possessed, 460
 A little yellow, canvas-covered book,
 A slender abstract of the Arabian tales;
 And, from companions in a new abode,
 When first I learnt, that this dear prize of mine
 Was but a block hewn from a mighty quarry—
 That there were four large volumes, laden all
 With kindred matter, 'twas to me, in truth,
 A promise scarcely earthly. Instantly,
 With one not richer than myself, I made
 A covenant that each should lay aside 470
 The moneys he possessed, and hoard up more,

Till our joint savings had amassed enough
 To make this book our own. Through several months,
 In spite of all temptation, we preserved
 Religiously that vow ; but firmness failed,
 Nor were we ever masters of our wish.

And when thereafter to my father's house
 The holidays returned me, there to find
 That golden store of books which I had left,
 What joy was mine ! How often in the course 480
 Of those glad respites, though a soft west wind
 Ruffled the waters to the angler's wish,
 For a whole day together, have I lain
 Down by thy side, O Derwent ! murmuring stream,
 On the hot stones, and in the glaring sun,
 And there have read, devouring as I read,
 Defrauding the day's glory, desperate !
 Till with a sudden bound of smart reproach,
 Such as an idler deals with in his shame,
 I to the sport betook myself again. 490

A gracious spirit o'er this earth presides,
 And o'er the heart of man : invisibly
 It comes, to works of unproved delight,
 And tendency benign, directing those
 Who care not, know not, think not what they do.
 The tales that charm away the wakeful night
 In Araby ; romances ; legends penned
 For solace by dim light of monkish lamps ;
 Fictions, for ladies of their love, devised
 By youthful squires ; adventures endless, spun 500
 By the dismantled warrior in old age,
 Out of the bowels of those very schemes
 In which his youth did first extravagate ;
 These spread like day, and something in the shape
 Of these will live till man shall be no more.
 Dumb yearnings, hidden appetites, are ours,
 And *they must* have their food. Our childhood sits,
 Our simple childhood, sits upon a throne
 That hath more power than all the elements.
 I guess not what this tells of Being past, 510
 Nor what it augurs of the life to come ;
 But so it is, and, in that dubious hour,
 That twilight when we first begin to see
 This dawning earth, to recognise, expect,
 And, in the long probation that ensues,
 The time of trial, ere we learn to live

In reconciliation with our stinted powers ;
 To endure this state of meagre vassalage,
 Unwilling to forego, confess, submit,
 Uneasy and unsettled, yoke-fellows 520
 To custom, mettlesome, and not yet tamed
 And humbled down ;—oh ! then we feel, we feel,
 We know where we have friends. Ye dreamers, then,
 Forgers of daring tales ! we bless you then,
 Impostors, drivellers, dotards, as the ape
 Philosophy will call you : *then* we feel
 With what, and how great might ye are in league,
 Who make our wish our power, our thought a deed,
 An empire, a possession,—ye whom time
 And seasons serve ; all Faculties to whom 530
 Earth crouches, the elements are potter's clay,
 Space like a heaven filled up with northern lights,
 Here, nowhere, there, and everywhere at once.

Relinquishing this lofty eminence
 For ground, though humbler, not the less a tract
 Of the same isthmus, which our spirits cross
 In progress from their native continent
 To earth and human life, the Song might dwell
 On that delightful time of growing youth
 When craving for the marvellous gives way 540
 To strengthening love for things that we have seen ;
 When sober truth and steady sympathies,
 Offered to notice by less daring pens,
 Take firmer hold of us, and words themselves
 Move us with conscious pleasure.

I am sad

At thought of raptures now for ever flown ;
 Almost to tears I sometimes could be sad
 To think of, to read over, many a page,
 Poems withal of name, which at that time
 Did never fail to entrance me, and are now 550
 Dead in my eyes, dead as a theatre
 Fresh emptied of spectators. Twice five years
 Or less I might have seen, when first my mind
 With conscious pleasure opened to the charm
 Of words in tuneful order, found them sweet
 For their own *sakes*, a passion, and a power ;
 And phrases pleased me chosen for delight,
 For pomp, or love. Oft, in the public roads
 Yet unfrequented, while the morning light
 Was yellowing the hill tops, I went abroad 560
 With a dear friend, and for the better part

Of two delightful hours we strolled along
 By the still borders of the misty lake,
 Repeating favourite verses with one voice,
 Or conning more, as happy as the birds
 That round us chaunted. Well might we be glad,
 Lifted above the ground by airy fancies,
 More bright than madness or the dreams of wine ;
 And, though full oft the objects of our love
 Were false, and in their splendour overwrought, 570
 Yet was there surely then no vulgar power
 Working within us,—nothing less, in truth,
 Than that most noble attribute of man,
 Though yet untutored and inordinate,
 That wish for something loftier, more adorned,
 Than is the common aspect, daily garb,
 Of human life. What wonder, then, if sounds
 Of exultation echoed through the groves !
 For, images, and sentiments, and words,
 And everything encountered or pursued 580
 In that delicious world of poesy,
 Kept holiday, a never-ending show,
 With music, incense, festival, and flowers !

Here must we pause : this only let me add,
 From heart-experience, and in humblest sense
 Of modesty, that he, who in his youth
 A daily wanderer among woods and fields
 With living Nature hath been intimate,
 Not only in that raw unpractised time
 Is stirred to ecstasy, as others are, 590
 By glittering verse ; but further, doth receive,
 In measure only dealt out to himself,
 Knowledge and increase of enduring joy
 From the great Nature that exists in works
 Of mighty Poets. Visionary power
 Attends the motions of the viewless winds,
 Embodied in the mystery of words :
 There, darkness makes abode, and all the host
 Of shadowy things work endless changes,—there,
 As in a mansion like their proper home,
 Even forms and substances are circumfused
 By that transparent veil with light divine,
 And, through the turnings intricate of verse,
 Present themselves as objects recognised,
 In flashes, and with glory not their own. 600

BOOK SIXTH

CAMBRIDGE AND THE ALPS

THE leaves were fading when to Esthwaite's banks
 And the simplicities of cottage life
 I bade farewell; and, one among the youth
 Who, summoned by that season, reunite
 As scattered birds troop to the fowler's lure,
 Went back to Granta's cloisters, not so prompt
 Or eager, though as gay and undepressed
 In mind, as when I thence had taken flight
 A few short months before. I turned my face
 Without repining from the coves and heights
 Clothed in the sunshine of the withering fern; 10
 Quitted, not loth, the mild magnificence
 Of calmer lakes and louder streams; and you,
 Frank-hearted maids of rocky Cumberland,
 You and your not unwelcome days of mirth
 Relinquished, and your nights of revelry,
 And in my own unlovely cell sate down
 In lightsome mood—such privilege has youth
 That cannot take long leave of pleasant thoughts.

The bonds of indolent society 20
 Relaxing in their hold, henceforth I lived
 More to myself. Two winters may be passed
 Without a separate notice: many books
 Were skimmed, devoured, or studiously perused,
 But with no settled plan. I was detached
 Internally from academic cares;
 Yet independent study seemed a course
 Of hardy disobedience towards friends
 And kindred, proud rebellion and unkind.
 This spurious virtue, rather let it bear 30
 A name it now deserves, this cowardice,
 Gave treacherous sanction to that over-love
 Of freedom which encouraged me to turn
 From regulations even of my own
 As from restraints and bonds. Yet who can tell—
 Who knows what thus may have been gained, both then
 And at a later season, or preserved;
 What love of nature, what original strength
 Of contemplation, what intuitive truths,
 The deepest and the best, what keen research, 40
 Unbiassed, unbewildered, and unawed?

The Poet's soul was with me at that time ;
 Sweet meditations, the still overflow
 Of present happiness, while future years
 Lacked not anticipations, tender dreams,
 No few of which have since been realised ;
 And some remain, hopes for my future life.
 Four years and thirty, told this very week,
 Have I been now a sojourner on earth,
 By sorrow not unsmitten ; yet for me 50
 Life's morning radiance hath not left the hills,
 Her dew is on the flowers. Those were the days
 Which also first emboldened me to trust
 With firmness, hitherto but slightly touched
 By such a daring thought, that I might leave
 Some monument behind me which pure hearts
 Should reverence. The instinctive humbleness,
 Maintained even by the very name and thought
 Of printed books and authorship, began
 To melt away ; and further, the dread awe 60
 Of mighty names was softened down and seemed
 Approachable, admitting fellowship
 Of modest sympathy. Such aspect now,
 Though not familiarly, my mind put on,
 Content to observe, to achieve, and to enjoy.

All winter long, whenever free to choose,
 Did I by night frequent the College groves
 And tributary walks ; the last, and oft
 The only one, who had been lingering there
 Through hours of silence, till the porter's bell, 70
 A punctual follower on the stroke of nine,
 Rang with its blunt unceremonious voice,
 Inexorable summons ! Lofty elms,
 Inviting shades of opportune recess,
 Bestowed composure on a neighbourhood
 Unpeaceful in itself. A single tree
 With sinuous trunk, boughs exquisitely wreathed,
 Grew there ; an ash which Winter for himself
 Decked as in pride, and with outlandish grace :
 Up from the ground, and almost to the top, 80
 The trunk and every master branch were green
 With clustering ivy, and the lightsome twigs
 And outer spray profusely tipped with seeds
 That hung in yellow tassels, while the air
 Stirred them, not voiceless. Often have I stood
 Foot-bound uplooking at this lovely tree
 Beneath a frosty moon. The hemisphere

Of magic fiction, verse of mine perchance
 May never tread ; but scarcely Spenser's self
 Could have more tranquil visions in his youth, 90
 Or could more bright appearances create
 Of human forms with superhuman powers,
 Than I beheld loitering on calm clear nights
 Alone, beneath this fairy work of earth.

On the vague reading of a truant youth
 'Twere idle to descant. My inner judgment
 Not seldom differed from my taste in books,
 As if it appertained to another mind,
 And yet the books which then I valued most
 Are dearest to me *now* ; for, having scanned, 100
 Not heedlessly, the laws, and watched the forms
 Of Nature, in that knowledge I possessed
 A standard, often usefully applied,
 Even when unconsciously, to things removed
 From a familiar sympathy.—In fine,
 I was a better judge of thoughts than words,
 Misled in estimating words, not only
 By common inexperience of youth,
 But by the trade in classic niceties,
 The dangerous craft of culling term and phrase 110
 From languages that want the living voice
 To carry meaning to the natural heart ;
 To tell us what is passion, what is truth,
 What reason, what simplicity and sense.

Yet may we not entirely overlook
 The pleasure gathered from the rudiments
 Of geometric science. Though advanced
 In these enquiries, with regret I speak,
 No farther than the threshold, there I found
 Both elevation and composed delight : 120
 With Indian awe and wonder, ignorance pleased
 With its own struggles, did I meditate
 On the relation those abstractions bear
 To Nature's laws, and by what process led,
 Those immaterial agents bowed their heads
 Duly to serve the mind of earth-born man ;
 From star to star, from kindred sphere to sphere,
 From system on to system without end.

More frequently from the same source I drew
 A pleasure quiet and profound, a sense 130
 Of permanent and universal sway,

And paramount belief; there, recognized
 A type, for finite natures, of the one
 Supreme Existence, the surpassing life
 Which—to the boundaries of space and time,
 Of melancholy space and doleful time,
 Superior, and incapable of change,
 Nor touched by welterings of passion—is,
 And hath the name of, God. Transcendent peace
 And silence did await upon these thoughts 140
 That were a frequent comfort to my youth.

'Tis told by one whom stormy waters threw,
 With fellow-sufferers by the shipwreck spared,
 Upon a desert coast, that having brought
 To land a single volume, saved by chance,
 A treatise of Geometry, he wont,
 Although of food and clothing destitute,
 And beyond common wretchedness depressed,
 To part from company and take this book
 (Then first a self-taught pupil in its truths) 150
 To spots remote, and draw his diagrams
 With a long staff upon the sand, and thus
 Did oft beguile his sorrow, and almost
 Forget his feeling: so (if like effect
 From the same cause produced, 'mid outward things
 So different, may rightly be compared),
 So was it then with me, and so will be
 With Poets ever. Mighty is the charm
 Of those abstractions to my mind beset
 With images, and haunted by herself, 160
 And specially delightful unto me
 Was that clear synthesis built up aloft
 So gracefully; even then when it appeared
 Not more than a mere plaything, or a toy
 To sense embodied: not the thing it is
 In verity, an independent world,
 Created out of pure intelligence.

Such dispositions then were mine unearned
 By aught, I fear, of genuine desert—
 Mine, through heaven's grace and inborn aptitudes. 170
 And not to leave the story of that time
 Imperfect, with these habits must be joined
 Moods melancholy, fits of spleen, that loved
 A pensive sky, sad days, and piping winds,
 The twilight more than dawn, autumn than spring;
 A treasured and luxurious gloom of choice

And inclination mainly, and the mere
Redundancy of youth's contentedness.

—To time thus spent, add multitudes of hours

Pilfered away, by what the Bard who sang 180

Of the Enchanter Indolence hath called

'Good-natured lounging,' and behold a map

Of my collegiate life—far less intense

Than duty called for, or, without regard

To duty, *might* have sprung up of itself

By change of accidents, or even, to speak

Without unkindness, in another place.

Yet why take refuge in that plea?—the fault,

This I repeat, was mine; mine be the blame.

In summer, making quest for works of art,

190

Or scenes renowned for beauty, I explored

That streamlet whose blue current works its way

Between romantic Dovedale's spiry rocks;

Pried into Yorkshire dales, or hidden tracts

Of my own native region, and was blest

Between these sundry wanderings with a joy

Above all joys, that seemed another morn

Risen on mid noon; blest with the presence,

Friend!

Of that sole Sister, her who hath been long

Dear to thee also, thy true friend and mine,

200

Now, after separation desolate,

Restored to me—such absence that she seemed

A gift then first bestowed. The varied banks

Of Emont, hitherto unnamed in song,

And that monastic castle, 'mid tall trees,

Low-standing by the margin of the stream,

A mansion visited (as fame reports)

By Sidney, where, in sight of our Helvellyn,

Or stormy Cross-fell, snatches he might pen

Of his Arcadia, by fraternal love

210

Inspired;—that river and those mouldering towers

Have seen us side by side, when, having clomb

The darksome windings of a broken stair,

And crept along a ridge of fractured wall,

Not without trembling, we in safety looked

Forth, through some Gothic window's open space,

And gathered with one mind a rich reward

From the far-stretching landscape, by the light

Of morning beautified, or purple eve;

Or, not less pleased, lay on some turret's head,

220

Catching from tufts of grass and harebell flowers

Their faintest whisper to the passing breeze,
Given out while mid-day heat oppressed the plains.

Another maid there was, who also shed
A gladness o'er that season, then to me,
By her exulting outside look of youth
And placid under-countenance, first endeared ;
That other spirit, Coleridge ! who is now
So near to us, that meek confiding heart,
So revered by us both. O'er paths and fields 230
In all that neighbourhood, through narrow lanes
Of eglantine, and through the shady woods,
And o'er the Border Beacon, and the waste
Of naked pools, and common crags that lay
Exposed on the bare fell, were scattered love,
The spirit of pleasure, and youth's golden gleam.
O Friend ! we had not seen thee at that time,
And yet a power is on me, and a strong
Confusion, and I seem to plant thee there.
Far art thou wandered now in search of health 240
And milder breezes,—melancholy lot !
But thou art with us, with us in the past,
The present, with us in the times to come.
There is no grief, no sorrow, no despair,
No languor, no dejection, no dismay,
No absence scarcely can there be, for those
Who love as we do. Speed thee well ! divide
With us thy pleasure ; thy returning strength,
Receive it daily as a joy of ours ;
Share with us thy fresh spirits, whether gift 250
Of gales Etesian or of tender thoughts.

I, too, have been a wanderer ; but, alas !
How different the fate of different men.
Though mutually unknown, yea, nursed and reared
As if in several elements, we were framed
To bend at last to the same discipline,
Predestined, if two beings ever were,
To seek the same delights, and have one health,
One happiness. Throughout this narrative,
Else sooner ended, I have borne in mind 260
For whom it registers the birth, and marks the growth,
Of gentleness, simplicity, and truth,
And joyous loves, that hallow innocent days
Of peace and self-command. Of rivers, fields,
And groves I speak to thee, my Friend ! to thee,
Who, yet a liveried schoolboy, in the depths

Of the huge city, on the leaded roof
Of that wide edifice, thy school and home,
Wert used to lie and gaze upon the clouds
Moving in heaven ; or, of that pleasure tired, 270
To shut thine eyes, and by internal light
See trees, and meadows, and thy native stream,
Far distant, thus beheld from year to year
Of a long exile. Nor could I forget,
In this late portion of my argument,
That scarcely, as my term of pupilage
Ceased, had I left those academic bowers
When thou wert thither guided. From the heart
Of London, and from cloisters there, thou camest,
And didst sit down in temperance and peace, 280
A rigorous student. What a stormy course
Then followed. Oh ! it is a pang that calls
For utterance, to think what easy change
Of circumstances might to thee have spared
A world of pain, ripened a thousand hopes,
For ever withered. Through this retrospect
Of my collegiate life I still have had
Thy after-sojourn in the self-same place
Present before my eyes, have played with times
And accidents as children do with cards, 290
Or as a man, who, when his house is built,
A frame locked up in wood and stone, doth still,
As impotent fancy prompts, by his fireside,
Rebuild it to his liking. I have thought
Of thee, thy learning, gorgeous eloquence,
And all the strength and plumage of thy youth,
Thy subtle speculations, toils abstruse
Among the schoolmen, and Platonic forms
Of wild ideal pageantry, shaped out
From things well-matched or ill, and words for things,
The self-created sustenance of a mind 301
Debarred from Nature's living images,
Compelled to be a life unto herself,
And unrelentingly possessed by thirst
Of greatness, love, and beauty. Not alone,
Ah ! surely not in singleness of heart
Should I have seen the light of evening fade
From smooth Cam's silent waters : had we met,
Even at that early time, needs must I trust
In the belief, that my maturer age, 310
My calmer habits, and more steady voice,
Would with an influence benign have soothed,
Or chased away, the airy wretchedness

That battered on thy youth. But thou hast trod
 A march of glory, which doth put to shame
 These vain regrets; health suffers in thee, else
 Such grief for thee would be the weakest thought
 That ever harboured in the breast of man.

A passing word erewhile did lightly touch
 On wanderings of my own, that now embraced 320
 With livelier hope a region wider far.

When the third summer freed us from restraint,
 A youthful friend, he too a mountaineer,
 Not slow to share my wishes, took his staff,
 And sallying forth, we journeyed side by side,
 Bound to the distant Alps. A hardy slight
 Did this unprecedented course imply
 Of college studies and their set rewards;
 Nor had, in truth, the scheme been formed by me
 Without uneasy forethought of the pain, 330
 The censures, and ill-omening of those
 To whom my worldly interests were dear.
 But Nature then was sovereign in my mind,
 And mighty forms, seizing a youthful fancy,
 Had given a charter to irregular hopes.
 In any age of uneventful calm
 Among the nations, surely would my heart
 Have been possessed by similar desire;
 But Europe at that time was thrilled with joy,
 France standing on the top of golden hours, 340
 And human nature seeming born again.

Lightly equipped, and but a few brief looks
 Cast on the white cliffs of our native shore
 From the receding vessel's deck, we chanced
 To land at Calais on the very eve
 Of that great federal day; and there we saw,
 In a mean city, and among a few,
 How bright a face is worn when joy of one
 Is joy for tens of millions. Southward thence
 We held our way, direct through hamlets, towns, 350
 Gaudy with reliques of that festival,
 Flowers left to wither on triumphal arcs,
 And window-garlands. On the public roads,
 And, once, three days successively, through paths
 By which our toilsome journey was abridged,
 Among sequestered villages we walked
 And found benevolence and blessedness

Spread like a fragrance everywhere, when spring
 Hath left no corner of the land untouched :
 Where elms for many and many a league in files 360
 With their thin umbrage, on the stately roads
 Of that great kingdom, rustled o'er our heads,
 For ever near us as we paced along :
 How sweet at such a time, with such delight
 On every side, in prime of youthful strength,
 To feed a Poet's tender melancholy
 And fond conceit of sadness, with the sound
 Of undulations varying as might please
 The wind that swayed them ; once, and more than
 once,

Unhoused beneath the evening star we saw 370
 Dances of liberty, and, in late hours
 Of darkness, dances in the open air
 Deftly prolonged, though grey-haired lookers on
 Might waste their breath in chiding.

Under hills—

The vine-clad hills and slopes of Burgundy,
 Upon the bosom of the gentle Saone
 We glided forward with the flowing stream.
 Swift Rhone ! thou wert the *nings* on which we cut
 A winding passage with majestic ease
 Between thy lofty rocks. Enchanting show 380
 Those woods and farms and orchards did present,
 And single cottages and lurking towns,
 Reach after reach, succession without end
 Of deep and stately vales ! A lonely pair
 Of strangers, till day closed, we sailed along,
 Clustered together with a merry crowd
 Of those emancipated, a blithe host
 Of travellers, chiefly delegates returning
 From the great spousals newly solemnized
 At their chief city, in the sight of Heaven. 390
 Like bees they swarmed, gaudy and gay as bees ;
 Some vapoured in the unruliness of joy,
 And with their swords flourished as if to fight
 The saucy air. In this proud company
 We landed—took with them our evening meal,
 Guests welcome almost as the angels were
 To Abraham of old. The supper done,
 With flowing cups elate and happy thoughts
 We rose at signal given, and formed a ring
 And, hand in hand, danced round and round the board ;
 All hearts were open, every tongue was loud 401
 With amity and glee ; we bore a name

Honoured in France, the name of Englishmen,
 And hospitably did they give us hail,
 As their forerunners in a glorious course;
 And round and round the board we danced again.
 With these blithe friends our voyage we renewed
 At early dawn. The monastery bells
 Made a sweet jingling in our youthful ears;
 The rapid river flowing without noise, 410
 And each uprising or receding spire
 Spake with a sense of peace, at intervals
 Touching the heart amid the boisterous crew
 By whom we were encompassed. Taking leave
 Of this glad throng, foot-travellers side by side,
 Measuring our steps in quiet, we pursued
 Our journey, and ere twice the sun had set
 Beheld the Convent of Chartreuse, and there
 Rested within an awful *solitude*:
 Yes; for even then no other than a place 420
 Of soul-affecting *solitude* appeared
 That far-famed region, though our eyes had seen,
 As toward the sacred mansion we advanced,
 Arms flashing, and a military glare
 Of riotous men commissioned to expel
 The blameless inmates, and belike subvert
 That frame of social being, which so long
 Had bodied forth the ghostliness of things
 In silence visible and perpetual calm.
 —‘Stay, stay your sacrilegious hands!’—The voice 430
 Was Nature’s, uttered from her Alpine throne;
 I heard it then, and seem to hear it now—
 ‘Your impious work forbear! Perish what may,
 Let this one temple last, be this one spot
 Of earth devoted to eternity!’
 She ceased to speak, but while St. Bruno’s pines
 Waved their dark tops, not silent as they waved,
 And while below, along their several beds,
 Murmured the sister streams of Life and Death,
 Thus by conflicting passions pressed, my heart 440
 Responded; ‘Honour to the patriot’s zeal!
 Glory and hope to new-born Liberty!
 Hail to the mighty projects of the time!
 Discerning sword that Justice wields, do thou
 Go forth and prosper; and, ye purging fires,
 Up to the loftiest towers of Pride ascend,
 Fanned by the breath of angry Providence.
 But oh! if Past and Future be the wings
 On whose support harmoniously conjoined

Moves the great spirit of human knowledge, spare 450
 These courts of mystery, where a step advanced
 Between the portals of the shadowy rocks
 Leaves far behind life's treacherous vanities,
 For penitential tears and trembling hopes
 Exchanged—to equalise in God's pure sight
 Monarch and peasant: be the house redeemed
 With its unworldly votaries, for the sake
 Of conquest over sense, hourly achieved
 Through faith and meditative reason, resting
 Upon the word of heaven-imparted truth, 460
 Calmly triumphant; and for humbler claim
 Of that imaginative impulse sent
 From these majestic floods, yon shining cliffs,
 The untransmuted shapes of many worlds,
 Cerulean ether's pure inhabitants,
 These forests unapproachable by death,
 That shall endure as long as man endures,
 To think, to hope, to worship, and to feel,
 To struggle, to be lost within himself
 In trepidation, from the blank abyss 470
 To look with bodily eyes, and be consoled.
 Not seldom since that moment have I wished
 That thou, O Friend! the trouble or the calm
 Hadst shared, when, from profane regards apart,
 In sympathetic reverence we trod
 The floors of those dim cloisters, till that hour,
 From their foundation, strangers to the presence
 Of unrestricted and unthinking man.
 Abroad, how cheeringly the sunshine lay
 Upon the open lawns! Vallombre's groves 480
 Entering, we fed the soul with darkness; thence
 Issued, and with uplifted eyes beheld,
 In different quarters of the bending sky,
 The cross of Jesus stand erect, as if
 Hands of angelic powers had fixed it there,
 Memorial revered by a thousand storms,—
 Yet then, from the indiscriminating sweep
 And rage of one State-whirlwind, insecure.

'Tis not my present purpose to retrace
 That variegated journey step by step. 490
 A march it was of military speed,
 And Earth did change her images and forms
 Before us, fast as clouds are changed in heaven.
 Day after day, up early and down late,
 From hill to vale we dropped, from vale to hill

Mounted—from province on to province swept,
 Keen hunters in a chase of fourteen weeks,
 Eager as birds of prey, or as a ship
 Upon the stretch, when winds are blowing fair :
 Sweet coverts did we cross of pastoral life, 500
 Enticing valleys, greeted them and left
 Too soon, while yet the very flash and gleam
 Of salutation were not passed away.
 Oh ! sorrow for the youth who could have seen
 Unchastened, unsubdued, unawed, unraised
 To patriarchal dignity of mind,
 And pure simplicity of wish and will,
 Those sanctified abodes of peaceful man,
 Pleased (though to hardship born, and compassed round
 With danger, varying as the seasons change), 510
 Pleased with his daily task, or, if not pleased,
 Contented, from the moment that the dawn
 (Ah ! surely not without attendant gleams
 Of soul-illumination) calls him forth
 To industry, by glistenings flung on rocks,
 Whose evening shadows lead him to repose.

Well might a stranger look with bounding heart
 Down on a green recess, the first I saw
 Of those deep haunts, an aboriginal vale,
 Quiet and lorded over and possessed 520
 By naked huts, wood-built, and sown like tents
 Or Indian cabins over the fresh lawns
 And by the river side.

That very day,
 From a bare ridge we also first beheld
 Unveiled the summit of Mont Blanc, and grieved
 To have a soulless image on the eye
 That had usurped upon a living thought
 That never more could be. The wondrous Vale
 Of Chamouny stretched far below, and soon
 With its dumb cataracts and streams of ice, 530
 A motionless array of mighty waves,
 Five rivers broad and vast, made rich amends,
 And reconciled us to realities ;
 There small birds warble from the leafy trees,
 The eagle soars high in the element,
 There doth the reaper bind the yellow sheaf,
 The maiden spread the haycock in the sun,
 While Winter like a well-tamed lion walks,
 Descending from the mountain to make sport
 Among the cottages by beds of flowers. 540

Whate'er in this wide circuit we beheld,
 Or heard, was fitted to our unripe state
 Of intellect and heart. With such a book
 Before our eyes, we could not choose but read
 Lessons of genuine brotherhood, the plain
 And universal reason of mankind,
 The truths of young and old. Nor, side by side
 Pacing, two social pilgrims, or alone
 Each with his humour, could we fail to abound
 In dreams and fictions, pensively composed : 550
 Dejection taken up for pleasure's sake,
 And gilded sympathies, the willow wreath,
 And sober posies of funereal flowers,
 Gathered among those solitudes sublime
 From formal gardens of the lady Sorrow,
 Did sweeten many a meditative hour.

Yet still in me with those soft luxuries
 Mixed something of stern mood, an under-thirst
 Of vigour seldom utterly allayed :
 And from that source how different a sadness 560
 Would issue, let one incident make known.
 When from the Vallais we had turned, and clomb
 Along the Simplon's steep and rugged road,
 Following a band of muleteers, we reached
 A halting-place, where all together took
 Their noon-tide meal. Hastily rose our guide,
 Leaving us at the board ; awhile we lingered,
 Then paced the beaten downward way that led
 Right to a rough stream's edge, and there broke off ;
 The only track now visible was one 570
 That from the torrent's further brink held forth
 Conspicuous invitation to ascend
 A lofty mountain. After brief delay
 Crossing the unbridged stream, that road we took,
 And clomb with eagerness, till anxious fears
 Intruded, for we failed to overtake
 Our comrades gone before. By fortunate chance,
 While every moment added doubt to doubt,
 A peasant met us, from whose mouth we learned
 That to the spot which had perplexed us first 580
 We must descend, and there should find the road,
 Which in the stony channel of the stream
 Lay a few steps, and then along its banks ;
 And, that our future course, all plain to sight,
 Was downwards, with the current of that stream.
 Loth to believe what we so grieved to hear,

For still we had hopes that pointed to the clouds,
 We questioned him again, and yet again;
 But every word that from the peasant's lips
 Came in reply, translated by our feelings,
 Ended in this,—*that we had crossed the Alps.*

590

Imagination—here the Power so called
 Through sad incompetence of human speech,
 That awful Power rose from the mind's abyss,
 Like an unfathered vapour that enwraps,
 At once, some lonely traveller. I was lost;
 Halted without an effort to break through;
 But to my conscious soul I now can say—
 'I recognise thy glory': in such strength
 Of usurpation, when the light of sense
 Goes out, but with a flash that has revealed
 The invisible world, doth greatness make abode,
 There harbours; whether we be young or old,
 Our destiny, our being's heart and home,
 Is with infinitude, and only there;
 With hope it is, hope that can never die,
 Effort, and expectation, and desire,
 And something evermore about to be.
 Under such banners militant, the soul
 Seeks for no trophies, struggles for no spoils
 That may attest her prowess, blest in thoughts
 That are their own perfection and reward,
 Strong in herself and in beatitude
 That hides her, like the mighty flood of Nile
 Poured from his fount of Abyssinian clouds
 To fertilise the whole Egyptian plain.

600

610

The melancholy slackening that ensued
 Upon those tidings by the peasant given
 Was soon dislodged. Downwards we hurried fast,
 And, with the half-shaped road which we had missed,
 Entered a narrow chasm. The brook and road
 Were fellow-travellers in this gloomy strait,
 And with them did we journey several hours
 At a slow pace. The immeasurable height
 Of woods decaying, never to be decayed,
 The stationary blasts of waterfalls,
 And in the narrow rent at every turn
 Winds thwarting winds, bewildered and forlorn,
 The torrents shooting from the clear blue sky,
 The rocks that muttered close upon our ears,
 Black drizzling crags that spake by the way-side

621

630

As if a voice were in them, the sick sight
 And giddy prospect of the raving stream,
 The unfettered clouds and region of the Heavens,
 Tumult and peace, the darkness and the light—
 Were all like workings of one mind, the features
 Of the same face, blossoms upon one tree ;
 Characters of the great Apocalypse,
 The types and symbols of Eternity,
 Of first, and last, and midst, and without end. 640

That night our lodging was a house that stood
 Alone, within the valley, at a point
 Where, tumbling from aloft, a torrent swelled
 The rapid stream whose margin we had trod ;
 A dreary mansion, large beyond all need,
 With high and spacious rooms, deafened and stunned
 By noise of waters, making innocent sleep
 Lie melancholy among weary bones.

Uprisen betimes, our journey we renewed,
 Led by the stream, ere noon-day magnified 650
 Into a lordly river, broad and deep,
 Dimpling along in silent majesty,
 With mountains for its neighbours, and in view
 Of distant mountains and their snowy tops,
 And thus proceeding to Locarno's Lake,
 Fit resting-place for such a visitant.
 Locarno! spreading out in width like Heaven,
 How dost thou cleave to the poetic heart,
 Bask in the sunshine of the memory ;
 And Como! thou, a treasure whom the earth 660
 Keeps to herself, confined as in a depth
 Of Abyssinian privacy. I spake
 Of thee, thy chestnut woods, and garden plots
 Of Indian corn tended by dark-eyed maids ;
 Thy lofty steep, and pathways roofed with vines,
 Winding from house to house, from town to town,
 Sole link that binds them to each other ; walks,
 League after league, and cloistral avenues,
 Where silence dwells if music be not there :
 While yet a youth undisciplined in verse, 670
 Through fond ambition of that hour, I strove
 To chant your praise ; nor can approach you now
 Ungreeted by a more melodious Song,
 Where tones of Nature smoothed by learned Art
 May flow in lasting current. Like a breeze
 Or sunbeam over your domain I passed

In motion without pause; but ye have left
 Your beauty with me, a serene accord
 Of forms and colours, passive, yet endowed
 In their submissiveness with power as sweet 680
 And gracious, almost might I dare to say,
 As virtue is, or goodness; sweet as love,
 Or the remembrance of a generous deed,
 Or mildest visitations of pure thought,
 When God, the giver of all joy, is thanked
 Religiously, in silent blessedness;
 Sweet as this last herself, for such it is.

With those delightful pathways we advanced
 For two days' space, in presence of the Lake,
 That, stretching far among the Alps, assumed 690
 A character more stern. The second night,
 From sleep awakened, and misled by sound
 Of the church clock telling the hours with strokes
 Whose import then we had not learned, we rose
 By moonlight, doubting not that day was nigh,
 And that meanwhile, by no uncertain path,
 Along the winding margin of the lake,
 Led, as before, we should behold the scene,
 Hushed in profound repose. We left the town
 Of Gravedona with this hope; but soon 700
 Were lost, bewildered among woods immense,
 And on a rock sate down, to wait for day.
 An open place it was, and overlooked,
 From high, the sullen water far beneath,
 On which a dull red image of the moon
 Lay bedded, changing oftentimes its form
 Like an uneasy snake. From hour to hour
 We sate and sate, wondering as if the night
 Had been ensnared by witchcraft. On the rock
 At last we stretched our weary limbs for sleep 710
 But *could not* sleep, tormented by the stings
 Of insects, which with noise like that of noon
 Filled all the woods. The cry of unknown birds;
 The mountains more by blackness visible
 And their own size, than any outward light;
 The breathless wilderness of clouds; the clock
 That told, with unintelligible voice,
 The widely parted hours; the noise of streams,
 And sometimes rustling motions nigh at hand,
 That did not leave us free from personal fear;
 And, lastly, the withdrawing moon, that set 720
 Before us, while she still was high in heaven;—

These were our food ; and such a summer's night
 Followed that pair of golden days that shed
 On Como's Lake, and all that round it lay,
 Their fairest, softest, happiest influence.

But here I must break off, and bid farewell
 To days, each offering some new sight, or fraught
 With some untried adventure, in a course
 Prolonged till sprinklings of autumnal snow 730
 Checked our unwearied steps. Let this alone
 Be mentioned as a parting word, that not
 In hollow exultation, dealing out
 Hyperboles of praise comparative ;
 Not rich one moment to be poor for ever ;
 Not prostrate, overborne, as if the mind
 Herself were nothing, a mere pensioner
 On outward forms—did we in presence stand
 Of that magnificent region. On the front
 Of this whole Song is written that my heart 740
 Must, in such Temple, needs have offered up
 A different worship. Finally, whate'er
 I saw, or heard, or felt, was but a stream
 That flowed into a kindred stream ; a gale,
 Confederate with the current of the soul,
 To speed my voyage ; every sound or sight,
 In its degree of power, administered
 To grandeur or to tenderness,—to the one
 Directly, but to tender thoughts by means
 Less often instantaneous in effect ; 750
 Led me to these by paths that, in the main,
 Were more circuitous, but not less sure
 Duly to reach the point marked out by Heaven.

Oh, most belovèd Friend ! a glorious time,
 A happy time that was ; triumphant looks
 Were then the common language of all eyes ;
 As if awaked from sleep, the Nations hailed
 Their great expectancy : the fife of war
 Was then a spirit-stirring sound indeed,
 A blackbird's whistle in a budding grove. 760
 We left the Swiss exulting in the fate
 Of their near neighbours ; and, when shortening fast
 Our pilgrimage, nor distant far from home,
 We crossed the Brabant armies on the fret
 For battle in the cause of Liberty.
 A stripling, scarcely of the household then
 Of social life, I looked upon these things

As from a distance ; heard, and saw, and felt,
 Was touched, but with no intimate concern ;
 I seemed to move along them, as a bird 770
 Moves through the air, or as a fish pursues
 Its sport, or feeds in its proper element ;
 I wanted not that joy, I did not need
 Such help ; the ever-living universe,
 Turn where I might, was opening out its glories,
 And the independent spirit of pure youth
 Called forth, at every season, new delights
 Spread round my steps like sunshine o'er green fields.

BOOK SEVENTH

RESIDENCE IN LONDON

SIX changeful years have vanished since I first
 Poured out (saluted by that quickening breeze
 Which met me issuing from the City's walls)
 A glad preamble to this Verse : I sang
 Aloud, with fervour irresistible
 Of short-lived transport, like a torrent bursting,
 From a black thunder-cloud, down Scafell's side
 To rush and disappear. But soon broke forth
 (So willed the Muse) a less impetuous stream,
 That flowed awhile with unabating strength, 10
 Then stopped for years ; not audible again
 Before last primrose-time. Belovèd Friend !
 The assurance which then cheered some heavy thoughts
 On thy departure to a foreign land
 Has failed ; too slowly moves the promised work.
 Through the whole summer have I been at rest,
 Partly from voluntary holiday,
 And part through outward hindrance. But I heard,
 After the hour of sunset yester-even,
 Sitting within doors between light and dark, 20
 A choir of redbreasts gathered somewhere near
 My threshold,—minstrels from the distant woods
 Sent in on Winter's service, to announce,
 With preparation artful and benign,
 That the rough lord had left the surly North
 On his accustomed journey. The delight,
 Due to this timely notice, unawares

Smote me, and, listening, I in whispers said,
 'Ye heartsome Choristers, ye and I will be
 Associates, and, unscared by blustering winds, 30
 Will chant together.' Thereafter, as the shades
 Of twilight deepened, going forth, I spied
 A glow-worm underneath a dusky plume
 Or canopy of yet unwithered fern,
 Clear-shining, like a hermit's taper seen
 Through a thick forest. Silence touched me here
 No less than sound had done before; the child
 Of Summer, lingering, shining, by herself,
 The voiceless worm on the unfrequented hills,
 Seemed sent on the same errand with the choir 40
 Of Winter that had warbled at my door,
 And the whole year breathed tenderness and love.

The last night's genial feeling overflowed
 Upon this morning, and my favourite grove,
 Tossing in sunshine its dark boughs aloft,
 As if to make the strong wind visible,
 Wakes in me agitations like its own,
 A spirit friendly to the Poet's task,
 Which we will now resume with lively hope,
 Nor checked by aught of tamer argument, 50
 That lies before us, needful to be told.

Returned from that excursion, soon I bade
 Farewell for ever to the sheltered seats
 Of gowned students, quitted hall and bower,
 And every comfort of that privileged ground,
 Well pleased to pitch a vagrant tent among
 The unfenced regions of society.

Yet, undetermined to what course of life
 I should adhere, and seeming to possess
 A little space of intermediate time 60
 At full command, to London first I turned,
 In no disturbance of excessive hope,
 By personal ambition unenslaved,
 Frugal as there was need, and, though self-willed,
 From dangerous passions free. Three years had flown
 Since I had felt in heart and soul the shock
 Of the huge town's first presence, and had paced
 Her endless streets, a transient visitant :
 Now, fixed amid that concourse of mankind
 Where Pleasure whirls about incessantly, 70
 And life and labour seem but one, I filled

An idler's place ; an idler well content
 To have a house (what matter for a home ?)
 That owned him ; living cheerfully abroad
 With unchecked fancy ever on the stir,
 And all my young affections out of doors.

There was a time when whatsoe'er is feigned
 Of airy palaces, and gardens built
 By Genii of romance ; or hath in grave
 Authentic history been set forth of Rome, 80
 Alcaïro, Babylon, or Persepolis ;
 Or given upon report by pilgrim friars,
 Of golden cities ten months' journey deep
 Among Tartarian wilds—fell short, far short,
 Of what my fond simplicity believed
 And thought of London—held me by a chain
 Less strong of wonder and obscure delight.
 Whether the bolt of childhood's Fancy shot
 For me beyond its ordinary mark,
 'Twere vain to ask ; but in our flock of boys 90
 Was One, a cripple from his birth, whom chance
 Summoned from school to London ; fortunate
 And envied traveller ! When the Boy returned,
 After short absence, curiously I scanned
 His mien and person, nor was free, in sooth,
 From disappointment, not to find some change
 In look and air, from that new region brought,
 As if from Fairy-land. Much I questioned him ;
 And every word he uttered, on my ears
 Fell flatter than a caged parrot's note, 100
 That answers unexpectedly awry,
 And mocks the prompter's listening. Marvellous things
 Had vanity (quick Spirit that appears
 Almost as deeply seated and as strong
 In a Child's heart as fear itself) conceived
 For my enjoyment. Would that I could now
 Recall what then I pictured to myself,
 Of mitred Prelates, Lords in ermine clad,
 The King, and the King's Palace, and, not last,
 Nor least, Heaven bless him ! the renowned Lord
 Mayor : 110
 Dreams not unlike to those which once begat
 A change of purpose in young Whittington,
 When he, a friendless and a drooping boy,
 Sate on a stone, and heard the bells speak out
 Articulate music. Above all, one thought
 Baffled my understanding : how men lived

Even next-door neighbours, as we say, yet still
Strangers, not knowing each the other's name.

O, wond'rous power of words, by simple faith
Licensed to take the meaning that we love ! 120
Vauxhall and Ranelagh ! I then had heard
Of your green groves, and wilderness of lamps
Dimming the stars, and fireworks magical,
And gorgeous ladies, under splendid domes,
Floating in dance, or warbling high in air
The songs of spirits ! Nor had Fancy fed
With less delight upon that other class
Of marvels, broad-day wonders permanent :
The River proudly bridged ; the dizzy top
And Whispering Gallery of St. Paul's ; the tombs 130
Of Westminster ; the Giants of Guildhall ;
Bedlam, and those carved maniacs at the gates,
Perpetually recumbent ; Statues—man,
And the horse under him—in gilded pomp
Adorning flowery gardens, 'mid vast squares ;
The Monument, and that Chamber of the Tower
Where England's sovereigns sit in long array,
Their steeds bestriding,—every mimic shape
Cased in the gleaming mail the monarch wore,
Whether for gorgeous tournament addressed, 140
Or life or death upon the battle-field.
Those bold imaginations in due time
Had vanished, leaving others in their stead :
And now I looked upon the living scene ;
Familiarly perused it ; oftentimes,
In spite of strongest disappointment, pleased
Through courteous self-submission, as a tax
Paid to the object by prescriptive right.

Rise up, thou monstrous ant-hill on the plain
Of a too busy world ! Before me flow, 150
Thou endless stream of men and moving things !
Thy every-day appearance, as it strikes—
With wonder heightened, or sublimed by awe—
On strangers, of all ages ; the quick dance
Of colours, lights, and forms ; the deafening din ;
The comers and the goers face to face,
Face after face ; the string of dazzling wares,
Shop after shop, with symbols, blazoned names,
And all the tradesman's honours overhead :
Here, fronts of houses, like a title-page, 160
With letters huge inscribed from top to toe ;

Stationed above the door, like guardian saints,
 There, allegoric shapes, female or male,
 Or physiognomies of real men,
 Land-warriors, kings, or admirals of the sea,
 Boyle, Shakspeare, Newton, or the attractive head
 Of some quack-doctor, famous in his day.

Meanwhile the roar continues, till at length,
 Escaped as from an enemy, we turn
 Abruptly into some sequestered nook, 170
 Still as a sheltered place when winds blow loud !
 At leisure, thence, through tracts of thin resort,
 And sights and sounds that come at intervals,
 We take our way. A raree-show is here,
 With children gathered round ; another street
 Presents a company of dancing dogs,
 Or dromedary, with an antic pair
 Of monkeys on his back ; a minstrel band
 Of Savoyards ; or, single and alone, 180
 An English ballad-singer. Private courts,
 Gloomy as coffins, and unsightly lanes
 Thrilled by some female vendor's scream, belike
 The very shrillest of all London cries,
 May then entangle our impatient steps ;
 Conducted through those labyrinths, unawares,
 To privileged regions and inviolate,
 Where from their airy lodges studious lawyers
 Look out on waters, walks, and gardens green.

Thence back into the throng, until we reach,
 Following the tide that slackens by degrees, 190
 Some half-frequented scene, where wider streets
 Bring straggling breezes of suburban air.
 Here files of ballads dangle from dead walls ;
 Advertisements, of giant-size, from high
 Press forward, in all colours, on the sight ;
 These, bold in conscious merit, lower down ;
That, fronted with a most imposing word,
 Is, peradventure, one in masquerade.
 As on the broadening causeway we advance,
 Behold, turned upwards, a face hard and strong 200
 In lineaments, and red with over-toil.
 'Tis one encountered here and everywhere ;
 A travelling cripple, by the trunk cut short,
 And stumping on his arms. In sailor's garb
 Another lies at length, beside a range
 Of well-formed characters, with chalk inscribed

Upon the smooth flat stones : the Nurse is here,
 The Bachelor, that loves to sun himself,
 The military Idler, and the Dame,
 That field-ward takes her walk with decent steps. 210

Now homeward through the thickening hubbub,
 where
 See, among less distinguishable shapes,
 The begging scavenger, with hat in hand ;
 The Italian, as he thrids his way with care,
 Steadying, far-seen, a frame of images
 Upon his head ; with basket at his breast
 The Jew ; the stately and slow-moving Turk,
 With freight of slippers piled beneath his arm !

Enough ;—the mighty concourse I surveyed
 With no unthinking mind, well pleased to note 220
 Among the crowd all specimens of man,
 Through all the colours which the sun bestows,
 And every character of form and face :
 The Swede, the Russian ; from the genial south,
 The Frenchman and the Spaniard ; from remote
 America, the Hunter-Indian ; Moors,
 Malays, Lascars, the Tartar, the Chinese,
 And Negro Ladies in white muslin gowns.

At leisure, then, I viewed, from day to day,
 The spectacles within doors,—birds and beasts 230
 Of every nature, and strange plants convened
 From every clime ; and, next, those sights that ape
 The absolute presence of reality,
 Expressing, as in mirror, sea and land,
 And what earth is, and what she has to show.
 I do not here allude to subtlest craft,
 By means refined attaining purest ends,
 But imitations, fondly made in plain
 Confession of man's weakness and his loves.
 Whether the Painter, whose ambitious skill 240
 Submits to nothing less than taking in
 A whole horizon's circuit, do with power,
 Like that of angels or commissioned spirits,
 Fix us upon some lofty pinnacle,
 Or in a ship on waters, with a world
 Of life, and life-like mockery, beneath,
 Above, behind, far stretching, and before
 Or more mechanic artist represent
 By scale exact, in model, wood or clay,

From blended colours also borrowing help, 250
 Some miniature of famous spots or things,—
 St. Peter's Church ; or, more aspiring aim,
 In microscopic vision, Rome herself ;
 Or, haply, some choice rural haunt,—the Falls
 Of Tivoli ; and, high upon that steep,
 The Sibyl's mouldering Temple ! every tree,
 Villa, or cottage, lurking among rocks
 Throughout the landscape ; tuft, stone, scratch minute—
 All that the traveller sees when he is there.

Add to these exhibitions, mute and still, 260
 Others of wider scope, where living men,
 Music, and shifting pantomimic scenes,
 Diversified the allurements. Need I fear
 To mention by its name, as in degree,
 Lowest of these and humblest in attempt,
 Yet richly graced with honours of her own,
 Half-rural Sadler's Wells ? Though at that time
 Intolerant, as is the way of youth
 Unless itself be pleased, here more than once
 Taking my seat, I saw (nor blush to add, 270
 With ample recompense) giants and dwarfs,
 Clowns, conjurors, posture-masters, harlequins,
 Amid the uproar of the rabblement,
 Perform their feats. Nor was it mean delight
 To watch crude Nature work in untaught minds ;
 To note the laws and progress of belief ;
 Though obstinate on this way, yet on that
 How willingly we travel, and how far !
 To have, for instance, brought upon the scene
 The champion, Jack the Giant-killer : Lo ! 280
 He dons his coat of darkness : on the stage
 Walks, and achieves his wonders, from the eye
 Of living Mortal covert, 'as the moon
 Hid in her vacant interlunar cave.'
 Delusion bold ! and how can it be wrought ?
 The garb he wears is black as death, the word
 '*Invisible*' flames forth upon his chest.

Here, too, were 'forms and pressures of the time,'
 Rough, bold, as Grecian comedy displayed
 When Art was young ; dramas of living men, 290
 And recent things yet warm with life ; a sea-fight,
 Shipwreck, or some domestic incident
 Divulged by Truth and magnified by Fame ;
 Such as the daring brotherhood of late
 Set forth, too serious theme for that light place—

I mean, O distant Friend ! a story drawn
 From our own ground,—the Maid of Buttermere,—
 And how, unfaithful to a virtuous wife
 Deserted and deceived, the Spoiler came
 And wooed the artless daughter of the hills, 300
 And wedded her, in cruel mockery
 Of love and marriage bonds. These words to thee
 Must needs bring back the moment when we first,
 Ere the broad world rang with the maiden's name,
 Beheld her serving at the cottage inn ;
 Both stricken, as she entered or withdrew,
 With admiration of her modest mien
 And carriage, marked by unexampled grace.
 We since that time not unfamiliarly
 Have seen her,—her discretion have observed, 310
 Her just opinions, delicate reserve,
 Her patience, and humility of mind
 Unspoiled by commendation and the excess
 Of public notice—an offensive light
 To a meek spirit suffering inwardly.

From this memorial tribute to my theme
 I was returning, when, with sundry forms
 Commingled—shapes which met me in the way
 That we must tread—thy image rose again,
 Maiden of Buttermere ! She lives in peace 320
 Upon the spot where she was born and reared ;
 Without contamination doth she live
 In quietness, without anxiety :
 Beside the mountain-chapel, sleeps in earth
 Her new-born infant, fearless as a lamb
 That, thither driven from some unsheltered place,
 Rests underneath the little rock-like pile
 When storms are raging. Happy are they both—
 Mother and child !—These feelings, in themselves
 Trite, do yet scarcely seem so when I think 330
 On those ingenuous moments of our youth
 Ere we have learnt by use to slight the crimes
 And sorrows of the world. Those simple days
 Are now my theme ; and, foremost of the scenes,
 Which yet survive in memory, appears
 One, at whose centre sate a lovely Boy,
 A sportive infant, who, for six months' space,
 Not more, had been of age to deal about
 Articulate prattle—Child as beautiful
 As ever clung around a mother's neck,
 Or father fondly gazed upon with pride. 340

There, too, conspicuous for stature tall
 And large dark eyes, beside her infant stood
 The mother ; but, upon her cheeks diffused,
 False tints too well accorded with the glare
 From play-house lustres thrown without reserve
 On every object near. The Boy had been
 The pride and pleasure of all lookers-on
 In whatsoever place, but seemed in this
 A sort of alien scattered from the clouds. 350
 Of lusty vigour, more than infantine
 He was in limb, in cheek a summer rose
 Just three parts blown—a cottage-child—if e'er,
 By cottage-door on breezy mountain-side,
 Or in some sheltering vale, was seen a babe
 By Nature's gift so favoured. Upon a board
 Decked with refreshments had this child been placed,
 His little stage in the vast theatre,
 And there he sate surrounded with a throng
 Of chance spectators, chiefly dissolute men 360
 And shameless women, treated and caressed ;
 Ate, drank, and with the fruit and glasses played,
 While oaths and laughter and indecent speech
 Were rife about him as the songs of birds
 Contending after showers. The mother now
 Is fading out of memory, but I see
 The lovely Boy as I beheld him then
 Among the wretched and the falsely gay,
 Like one of those who walked with hair unsinged
 Amid the fiery furnace. Charms and spells 370
 Muttered on black and spiteful instigation
 Have stopped, as some believe, the kindest growths.
 Ah, with how different spirit might a prayer
 Have been preferred, that this fair creature, checked
 By special privilege of Nature's love,
 Should in his childhood be detained for ever !
 But with its universal freight the tide
 Hath rolled along, and this bright innocent,
 Mary ! may now have lived till he could look
 With envy on thy nameless babe that sleeps, 380
 Beside the mountain-chapel, undisturbed.

Four rapid years had scarcely then been told
 Since, travelling southward from our pastoral hills,
 I heard, and for the first time in my life,
 The voice of woman utter blasphemy—
 Saw woman as she is, to open shame
 Abandoned, and the pride of public vice ;

I shuddered, for a barrier seemed at once
 Thrown in, that from humanity divorced
 Humanity, splitting the race of man 390
 In twain, yet leaving the same outward form.
 Distress of mind ensued upon the sight,
 And ardent meditation. Later years
 Brought to such spectacle a milder sadness,
 Feelings of pure commiseration, grief
 For the individual and the overthrow
 Of her soul's beauty ; farther I was then
 But seldom led, or wished to go ; in truth
 The sorrow of the passion stopped me there.

But let me now, less moved, in order take 400
 Our argument. Enough is said to show
 How casual incidents of real life,
 Observed where pastime only had been sought,
 Outweighed, or put to flight, the set events
 And measured passions of the stage, albeit
 By Siddons trod in the fulness of her power.
 Yet was the theatre my dear delight ;
 The very gilding, lamps and painted scrolls,
 And all the mean upholstery of the place,
 Wanted not animation, when the tide 410
 Of pleasure ebbed but to return as fast
 With the ever-shifting figures of the scene,
 Solemn or gay : whether some beauteous dame
 Advanced in radiance through a deep recess
 Of thick entangled forest, like the moon
 Opening the clouds ; or sovereign king, announced
 With flourishing trumpet, came in full-blown state
 Of the world's greatness, winding round with train
 Of courtiers, banners, and a length of guards ;
 Or captive led in abject weeds, and jingling 420
 His slender manacles ; or romping girl
 Bounced, leapt, and pawed the air ; or mumbling sire,
 A scare-crow pattern of old age dressed up
 In all the tatters of infirmity
 All loosely put together, hobbled in,
 Stumping upon a cane with which he smites,
 From time to time, the solid boards, and makes them
 Prate somewhat loudly of the whereabouts
 Of one so overloaded with his years.
 But what of this ! the laugh, the grin, grimace, 430
 The antics striving to outstrip each other,
 Were all received, the least of them not lost,
 With an unmeasured welcome. Through the night,

Between the show, and many-headed mass
 Of the spectators, and each several nook
 Filled with its fray or brawl, how eagerly
 And with what flashes, as it were, the mind
 Turned this way—that way ! sportive and alert
 And watchful, as a kitten when at play,
 While winds are eddying round her, among straws 440
 And rustling leaves. Enchanting age and sweet !
 Romantic almost, looked at through a space,
 How small, of intervening years ! For then,
 Though surely no mean progress had been made
 In meditations holy and sublime,
 Yet something of a girlish child-like gloss
 Of novelty survived for scenes like these ;
 Enjoyment haply handed down from times
 When at a country-playhouse, some rude barn
 Tricked out for that proud use, if I perchance 450
 Caught, on a summer evening through a chink
 In the old wall, an unexpected glimpse
 Of daylight, the bare thought of where I was
 Gladdened me more than if I had been led
 Into a dazzling cavern of romance,
 Crowded with Genii busy among works
 Not to be looked at by the common sun.

The matter that detains us now may seem,
 To many, neither dignified enough
 Nor arduous, yet will not be scorned by them, 460
 Who, looking inward, have observed the ties
 That bind the perishable hours of life
 Each to the other, and the curious props
 By which the world of memory and thought
 Exists and is sustained. More lofty themes,
 Such as at least do wear a prouder face,
 Solicit our regard ; but when I think
 Of these, I feel the imaginative power
 Languish within me ; even then it slept,
 When, pressed by tragic sufferings, the heart 470
 Was more than full ; amid my sobs and tears
 It slept, even in the pregnant season of youth.
 For though I was most passionately moved
 And yielded to all changes of the scene
 With an obsequious promptness, yet the storm
 Passed not beyond the suburbs of the mind ;
 Save when realities of act and mien,
 The incarnation of the spirits that move
 In harmony amid the Poet's world,

Rose to ideal grandeur, or, called forth 480
 By power of contrast, made me recognise,
 As at a glance, the things which I had shaped,
 And yet not shaped, had seen and scarcely seen,
 When, having closed the mighty Shakspeare's page,
 I mused, and thought, and felt, in solitude.

Pass we from entertainments, that are such
 Professedly, to others titled higher,
 Yet, in the estimate of youth at least,
 More near akin to those than names imply,—
 I mean the brawls of lawyers in their courts 490
 Before the ermined judge, or that great stage
 Where senators, tongue-favoured men, perform,
 Admired and envied. Oh! the beating heart,
 When one among the prime of these rose up,—
 One, of whose name from childhood we had heard
 Familiarly, a household term, like those,
 The Bedfords, Glosters, Salisburys, of old
 Whom the fifth Harry talks of. Silence! hush!
 This is no trifler, no short-flighted wit,
 No stammerer of a minute, painfully 500
 Delivered. No! the Orator hath yoked
 The Hours, like young Aurora, to his car:
 Thrice welcome Presence! how can patience e'er
 Grow weary of attending on a track
 That kindles with such glory! All are charmed,
 Astonished; like a hero in romance,
 He winds away his never-ending horn;
 Words follow words, sense seems to follow sense:
 What memory and what logic! till the strain
 Transcendent, superhuman as it seemed, 510
 Grows tedious even in a young man's ear.

Genius of Burke! forgive the pen seduced
 By specious wonders, and too slow to tell
 Of what the ingenuous, what bewildered men,
 Beginning to mistrust their boastful guides,
 And wise men, willing to grow wiser, caught,
 Rapt auditors! from thy most eloquent tongue—
 Now mute, for ever mute in the cold grave.
 I see him,—old, but vigorous in age,—
 Stand like an oak whose stag-horn branches start 520
 Out of its leafy brow, the more to awe
 The younger brethren of the grove. But some—
 While he forewarns, denounces, launches forth,
 Against all systems built on abstract rights,

Keen ridicule ; the majesty proclaims
 Of Institutes and Laws, hallowed by time ;
 Declares the vital power of social ties
 Endeared by Custom ; and with high disdain,
 Exploding upstart Theory, insists
 Upon the allegiance to which men are born— 530
 Some—say at once a froward multitude—
 Murmur (for truth is hated, where not loved)
 As the winds fret within the Æolian cave,
 Galled by their monarch's chain. The times were big
 With ominous change, which, night by night, provoked
 Keen struggles, and black clouds of passion raised ;
 But memorable moments intervened,
 When Wisdom, like the Goddess from Jove's brain,
 Broke forth in armour of resplendent words,
 Startling the Synod. Could a youth, and one 540
 In ancient story versed, whose breast had heaved
 Under the weight of classic eloquence,
 Sit, see, and hear, unthankful, uninspired ?

Nor did the Pulpit's oratory fail
 To achieve its higher triumph. Not unfelt
 Were its admonishments, nor lightly heard
 The awful truths delivered thence by tongues
 Endowed with various power to search the soul ;
 Yet ostentation, domineering, oft
 Poured forth harangues, how sadly out of place !— 550
 There have I seen a comely bachelor,
 Fresh from a toilette of two hours, ascend
 His rostrum, with seraphic glance look up,
 And, in a tone elaborately low
 Beginning, lead his voice through many a maze
 A minuet course ; and, winding up his mouth,
 From time to time, into an orifice
 Most delicate, a lurking eyelet, small,
 And only not invisible, again
 Open it out, diffusing thence a smile 560
 Of rapt irradiation, exquisite.
 Meanwhile the Evangelists, Isaiah, Job,
 Moses, and he who penned, the other day,
 The Death of Abel, Shakspeare, and the Bard
 Whose genius spangled o'er a gloomy theme
 With fancies thick as his inspiring stars,
 And Ossian (doubt not—'tis the naked truth)
 Summoned from streamy Morven—each and all
 Would, in their turns, lend ornaments and flowers
 To entwine the crook of eloquence that helped 570

This pretty Shepherd, pride of all the plains,
To rule and guide his captivated flock.

I glance but at a few conspicuous marks,
Leaving a thousand others, that, in hall,
Court, theatre, conventicle, or shop,
In public room or private, park or street,
Each fondly reared on his own pedestal,
Looked out for admiration. Folly, vice,
Extravagance in gesture, mien, and dress,
And all the strife of singularity, 580
Lies to the ear, and lies to every sense—
Of these, and of the living shapes they wear,
There is no end. Such candidates for regard,
Although well pleased to be where they were found,
I did not hunt after, nor greatly prize,
Nor made unto myself a secret boast
Of reading them with quick and curious eye ;
But, as a common produce, things that are
To-day, to-morrow will be, took of them
Such willing note, as, on some errand bound 590
That asks not speed, a traveller might bestow
On sea-shells that bestrew the sandy beach,
Or daisies swarming through the fields of June.

But foolishness and madness in parade,
Though most at home in this their dear domain,
Are scattered everywhere, no rarities,
Even to the rudest novice of the Schools.
Me, rather, it employed, to note, and keep
In memory, those individual sights
Of courage, or integrity, or truth, 600
Or tenderness, which there, set off by foil,
Appeared more touching. One will I select ;
A Father—for he bore that sacred name—
Him saw I, sitting in an open square,
Upon a corner-stone of that low wall,
Wherein were fixed the iron pales that fenced
A spacious grass-plot ; there, in silence, sate
This One Man, with a sickly babe outstretched
Upon his knee, whom he had thither brought
For sunshine, and to breathe the fresher air. 610
Of those who passed, and me who looked at him,
He took no heed ; but in his brawny arms
(The Artificer was to the elbow bare,
And from his work this moment had been stolen)
He held the child, and, bending over it,

As if he were afraid both of the sun
 And of the air, which he had come to seek,
 Eyed the poor babe with love unutterable.

As the black storm upon the mountain-top
 Sets off the sunbeam in the valley, so 620
 That huge fermenting mass of human-kind
 Serves as a solemn background, or relief,
 To single forms and objects, whence they draw,
 For feeling and contemplative regard,
 More than inherent liveliness and power.
 How oft, amid those overflowing streets,
 Have I gone forward with the crowd, and said
 Unto myself, 'The face of every one
 That passes by me is a mystery!'
 Thus have I looked, nor ceased to look, oppressed 630
 By thoughts of what and whither, when and how,
 Until the shapes before my eyes became
 A second-sight procession, such as glides
 Over still mountains, or appears in dreams;
 And once, far-travelled in such mood, beyond
 The reach of common indication, lost
 Amid the moving pageant, I was smitten
 Abruptly, with the view (a sight not rare)
 Of a blind Beggar, who, with upright face,
 Stood, propped against a wall, upon his chest 640
 Wearing a written paper, to explain
 His story, whence he came, and who he was.
 Caught by the spectacle my mind turned round
 As with the might of waters; an apt type
 This label seemed of the utmost we can know,
 Both of ourselves and of the universe;
 And, on the shape of that unmoving man,
 His steadfast face and sightless eyes, I gazed,
 As if admonished from another world.

Though reared upon the base of outward things, 650
 Structures like these the excited spirit mainly
 Builds for herself; scenes different there are,
 Full-formed, that take, with small internal help,
 Possession of the faculties,—the peace
 That comes with night; the deep solemnity
 Of nature's intermediate hours of rest,
 When the great tide of human life stands still;
 The business of the day to come, unborn,
 Of that gone by, locked up, as in the grave;
 The blended calmness of the heavens and earth, 660

Moonlight and stars, and empty streets, and sounds
Unfrequent as in deserts; at late hours
Of winter evenings, when unwholesome rains
Are falling hard, with people yet astir,
The feeble salutation from the voice
Of some unhappy woman, now and then
Heard as we pass, when no one looks about,
Nothing is listened to. But these, I fear,
Are falsely catalogued; things that are, are not,
As the mind answers to them, or the heart 670
Is prompt, or slow, to feel. What say you, then,
To times, when half the city shall break out
Full of one passion, vengeance, rage, or fear?
To executions, to a street on fire,
Mobs, riots, or rejoicings? From these sights
Take one,—that ancient festival, the Fair,
Holden where martyrs suffered in past time,
And named of St. Bartholomew; there, see
A work completed to our hands, that lays,
If any spectacle on earth can do, 680
The whole creative powers of man asleep!—
For once, the Muse's help will we implore,
And she shall lodge us, wafted on her wings,
Above the press and danger of the crowd,
Upon some showman's platform. What a shock
For eyes and ears! what anarchy and din,
Barbarian and infernal,—a phantasma,
Monstrous in colour, motion, shape, sight, sound!
Below, the open space, through every nook
Of the wide area, twinkles, is alive 690
With heads; the midway region, and above,
Is thronged with staring pictures and huge scrolls,
Dumb proclamations of the Prodigies;
With chattering monkeys dangling from their poles,
And children whirling in their roundabouts;
With those that stretch the neck and strain the eyes,
And crack the voice in rivalry, the crowd
Inviting; with buffoons against buffoons
Grimacing, writhing, screaming,—him who grinds
The hurdy-gurdy, at the fiddle weaves, 700
Rattles the salt-box, thumps the kettle-drum,
And him who at the trumpet puffs his cheeks,
The silver-collared Negro with his timbrel,
Equestrians, tumblers, women, girls, and boys,
Blue-breeched, pink-vested, with high-towering
plumes.—
All moveables of wonder, from all parts,

Are here—Albinos, painted Indians, Dwarfs,
 The Horse of knowledge, and the learned Pig,
 The Stone-eater, the man that swallows fire,
 Giants, Ventriloquists, the Invisible Girl, 710
 The Bust that speaks and moves its goggling eyes,
 The Wax-work, Clock-work, all the marvellous craft
 Of modern Merlins, Wild Beasts, Puppet-shows,
 All out-o'-the-way, far-fetched, perverted things,
 All freaks of nature, all Promethean thoughts
 Of man, his dulness, madness, and their feats
 All jumbled up together, to compose
 A Parliament of Monsters. Tents and Booths
 Meanwhile, as if the whole were one vast mill,
 Are vomiting, receiving on all sides, 720
 Men, Women, three-years' Children, Babes in arms.

Oh, blank confusion ! true epitome
 Of what the mighty City is herself,
 To thousands upon thousands of her sons,
 Living amid the same perpetual whirl
 Of trivial objects, melted and reduced
 To one identity, by differences
 That have no law, no meaning, and no end—
 Oppression, under which even highest minds
 Must labour, whence the strongest are not free. 730
 But though the picture weary out the eye,
 By nature an unmanageable sight,
 It is not wholly so to him who looks
 In steadiness, who hath among least things
 An under-sense of greatest ; sees the parts
 As parts, but with a feeling of the whole.
 This, of all acquisitions, first awaits
 On sundry and most widely different modes
 Of education, nor with least delight
 On that through which I passed. Attention springs,
 And comprehensiveness and memory flow, 741
 From early converse with the works of God
 Among all regions ; chiefly where appear
 Most obviously simplicity and power.
 Think, how the everlasting streams and woods,
 Stretched and still stretching far and wide, exalt
 The roving Indian, on his desert sands :
 What grandeur not unfelt, what pregnant show
 Of beauty, meets the sun-burnt Arab's eye :
 And, as the sea propels, from zone to zone, 750
 Its currents ; magnifies its shoals of life
 Beyond all compass ; spreads, and sends aloft

Armies of clouds,—even so, its powers and aspects
 Shape for mankind, by principles as fixed,
 The views and aspirations of the soul
 To majesty. Like virtue have the forms
 Perennial of the ancient hills; nor less
 The changeful language of their countenances
 Quickens the slumbering mind, and aids the thoughts,
 However multitudinous, to move 760
 With order and relation. This, if still,
 As hitherto, in freedom I may speak,
 Not violating any just restraint,
 As may be hoped, of real modesty,—
 This did I feel, in London's vast domain.
 The Spirit of Nature was upon me there;
 The soul of Beauty and enduring Life
 Vouchsafed her inspiration, and diffused,
 Through meagre lines and colours, and the press
 Of self-destroying, transitory things, 770
 Composure, and ennobling Harmony.

BOOK EIGHTH

RETROSPECT—LOVE OF NATURE LEADING TO LOVE OF MAN

WHAT sounds are those, Helvellyn, that are
 heard
 Up to thy summit, through the depth of air
 Ascending, as if distance had the power
 To make the sounds more audible? What crowd
 Covers, or sprinkles o'er, yon village green?
 Crowd seems it, solitary hill! to thee,
 Though but a little family of men,
 Shepherds and tillers of the ground—betimes
 Assembled with their children and their wives,
 And here and there a stranger interspersed. 10
 They hold a rustic fair—a festival,
 Such as, on this side now, and now on that,
 Repeated through his tributary vales,
 Helvellyn, in the silence of his rest,
 Sees annually, if clouds towards either ocean
 Blown from their favourite resting-place, or mists
 Dissolved, have left him an unshrouded head.
 Delightful day it is for all who dwell

In this secluded glen, and eagerly
 They give it welcome. Long ere heat of noon, 20
 From byre or field the kine were brought; the sheep
 Are penned in cotes; the chaffering is begun.
 The heifer lows, uneasy at the voice
 Of a new master; bleat the flocks aloud.
 Booths are there none; a stall or two is here;
 A lame man or a blind, the one to beg,
 The other to make music; hither, too,
 From far, with basket, slung upon her arm,
 Of hawkers' wares—books, pictures, combs, and pins—
 Some aged woman finds her way again, 30
 Year after year, a punctual visitant!
 There also stands a speech-maker by rote,
 Pulling the strings of his boxed raree-show;
 And in the lapse of many years may come
 Prouder itinerant, mountebank, or he
 Whose wonders in a covered wain lie hid.
 But one there is, the loveliest of them all,
 Some sweet lass of the valley, looking out
 For gains, and who that sees her would not buy?
 Fruits of her father's orchard are her wares, 40
 And with the ruddy produce she walks round
 Among the crowd, half pleased with, half ashamed
 Of her new office, blushing restlessly.
 The children now are rich, for the old to-day
 Are generous as the young; and, if content
 With looking on, some ancient wedded pair
 Sit in the shade together, while they gaze,
 'A cheerful smile unbends the wrinkled brow,
 The days departed start again to life,
 And all the scenes of childhood reappear, 50
 Faint, but more tranquil, like the changing sun
 'To him who slept at noon and wakes at eve.'
 Thus gaiety and cheerfulness prevail,
 Spreading from young to old, from old to young,
 And no one seems to want his share.—Immense
 Is the recess, the circumambient world
 Magnificent, by which they are embraced:
 They move about upon the soft green turf:
 How little they, they and their doings, seem,
 And all that they can further or obstruct! 60
 Through utter weakness pitifully dear,
 As tender infants are: and yet how great!
 For all things serve them; them the morning light
 Loves, as it glistens on the silent rocks;
 And them the silent rocks, which now from high

Look down upon them ; the reposing clouds ;
 The wild brooks prattling from invisible haunts ;
 And old Helvellyn, conscious of the stir
 Which animates this day their calm abode.

With deep devotion, Nature, did I feel, 70
 In that enormous City's turbulent world
 Of men and things, what benefit I owed
 To thee, and those domains of rural peace,
 Where to the sense of beauty first my heart
 Was opened ; tract more exquisitely fair
 Than that famed paradise of ten thousand trees,
 Or Gehol's matchless gardens, for delight
 Of the Tartarian dynasty composed
 (Beyond that mighty wall, not fabulous,
 China's stupendous mound) by patient toil 80
 Of myriads and boon nature's lavish help ;
 There, in a clime from widest empire chosen,
 Fulfilling (could enchantment have done more ?)
 A sumptuous dream of flowery lawns, with domes
 Of pleasure sprinkled over, shady dells
 For eastern monasteries, sunny mounts
 With temples crested, bridges, gondolas,
 Rocks, dens, and groves of foliage taught to melt
 Into each other their obsequious hues,
 Vanished and vanishing in subtle chase, 90
 Too fine to be pursued ; or standing forth
 In no discordant opposition, strong
 And gorgeous as the colours side by side
 Bedded among rich plumes of tropic birds ;
 And mountains over all, embracing all ;
 And all the landscape, endlessly enriched
 With waters running, falling, or asleep.

But lovelier far than this, the paradise
 Where I was reared ; in Nature's primitive gifts 100
 Favoured no less, and more to every sense
 Delicious, seeing that the sun and sky,
 The elements, and seasons as they change,
 Do find a worthy fellow-labourer there—
 Man free, man working for himself, with choice
 Of time, and place, and object ; by his wants,
 His comforts, native occupations, cares,
 Cheerfully led to individual ends
 Or social, and still followed by a train
 Unwooed, unthought-of even—simplicity,
 And beauty, and inevitable grace. 110

Yea, when a glimpse of those imperial bowers
 Would to a child be transport over-great,
 When but a half-hour's roam through such a place
 Would leave behind a dance of images,
 That shall break in upon his sleep for weeks ;
 Even then the common haunts of the green earth,
 And ordinary interests of man,
 Which they embosom, all without regard
 As both may seem, are fastening on the heart
 Insensibly, each with the other's help. 120
 For me, when my affections first were led
 From kindred, friends, and playmates, to partake
 Love for the human creature's absolute self,
 That noticeable kindliness of heart
 Sprang out of fountains, there abounding most,
 Where sovereign Nature dictated the tasks
 And occupations which her beauty adorned,
 And Shepherds were the men that pleased me first ;
 Not such as Saturn ruled 'mid Latian wilds,
 With arts and laws so tempered, that their lives 130
 Left, even to us toiling in this late day,
 A bright tradition of the golden age ;
 Not such as, 'mid Arcadian fastnesses
 Sequestered, handed down among themselves
 Felicity, in Grecian song renowned ;
 Nor such as—when an adverse fate had driven,
 From house and home, the courtly band whose fortunes
 Entered, with Shakspeare's genius, the wild woods
 Of Arden—amid sunshine or in shade
 Culled the best fruits of Time's uncounted hours, 140
 Ere Phœbe sighed for the false Ganymede ;
 Or there where Perdita and Florizel
 Together danced, Queen of the feast, and King ;
 Nor such as Spenser fabled. True it is,
 That I had heard (what he perhaps had seen)
 Of maids at sunrise bringing in from far
 Their May-bush, and along the street in flocks
 Parading with a song of taunting rhymes,
 Aimed at the laggards slumbering within doors ;
 Had also heard, from those who yet remembered, 150
 Tales of the May-pole dance, and wreaths that decked
 Porch, door-way, or kirk-pillar ; and of youths,
 Each with his maid, before the sun was up,
 By annual custom, issuing forth in troops,
 To drink the waters of some sainted well,
 And hang it round with garlands. Love survives ;
 But, for such purpose, flowers no longer grow :

The times, too sage, perhaps too proud, have dropped
 These lighter graces ; and the rural ways
 And manners which my childhood looked upon 160
 Were the unluxuriant produce of a life
 Intent on little but substantial needs,
 Yet rich in beauty, beauty that was felt.
 But images of danger and distress,
 Man suffering among awful Powers and Forms,
 Of this I heard, and saw enough to make
 Imagination restless ; nor was free
 Myself from frequent perils ; nor were tales
 Wanting,—the tragedies of former times,
 Hazards and strange escapes, of which the rocks 170
 Immutable, and everflowing streams,
 Where'er I roamed, were speaking monuments.

Smooth life had flock and shepherd in old time,
 Long springs and tepid winters, on the banks
 Of delicate Galesus ; and no less
 Those scattered along Adria's myrtle shores :
 Smooth life had herdsman, and his snow-white herd
 To triumphs and to sacrificial rites
 Devoted, on the inviolable stream
 Of rich Clitumnus ; and the goat-herd lived 180
 As calmly, underneath the pleasant brows
 Of cool Lucretilis, where the pipe was heard
 Of Pan, Invisible God, thrilling the rocks
 With tutelary music, from all harm
 The fold protecting. I myself, mature
 In manhood then, have seen a pastoral tract
 Like one of these, where Fancy might run wild,
 Though under skies less generous, less serene :
 There, for her own delight had Nature framed
 A pleasure-ground, diffused a fair expanse 190
 Of level pasture, islanded with groves
 And banked with woody risings ; but the Plain
 Endless, here opening widely out, and there
 Shut up in lesser lakes or beds of lawn
 And intricate recesses, creek or bay
 Sheltered within a shelter, where at large
 The shepherd strays, a rolling hut his home.
 Thither he comes with spring-time, there abides
 All summer, and at sunrise ye may hear
 His flageolet to liquid notes of love 200
 Attuned, or sprightly fife resounding far.
 Nook is there none, nor tract of that vast space
 Where passage opens, but the same shall have

In turn its visitant, telling there his hours
 In unlaborious pleasure, with no task
 More toilsome than to carve a beechen bowl
 For spring or fountain, which the traveller finds,
 When through the region he pursues at will
 His devious course. A glimpse of such sweet life
 I saw when, from the melancholy walls 210
 Of Goslar, once imperial, I renewed
 My daily walk along that wide champaign,
 That, reaching to her gates, spreads east and west,
 And northwards, from beneath the mountainous verge
 Of the Hercynian forest. Yet, hail to you
 Moors, mountains, headlands, and ye hollow vales,
 Ye long deep channels for the Atlantic's voice,
 Powers of my native region! Ye that seize
 The heart with firmer grasp! Your snows and streams 220
 Ungovernable, and your terrifying winds,
 That howl so dismally for him who treads
 Companionless your awful solitudes!
 There, 'tis the shepherd's task the winter long
 To wait upon the storms: of their approach
 Sagacious, into sheltering coves he drives
 His flock, and thither from the homestead bears
 A toilsome burden up the craggy ways,
 And deals it out, their regular nourishment
 Strewn on the frozen snow. And when the spring
 Looks out, and all the pastures dance with lambs, 230
 And when the flock, with warmer weather, climbs
 Higher and higher, him his office leads
 To watch their goings, whatsoever track
 The wanderers choose. For this he quits his home
 At day-spring, and no sooner doth the sun
 Begin to strike him with a fire-like heat,
 Than he lies down upon some shining rock,
 And breakfasts with his dog. When they have stolen,
 As is their wont, a pittance from strict time,
 For rest not needed or exchange of love, 240
 Then from his couch he starts; and now his feet
 Crush out a livelier fragrance from the flowers
 Of lowly thyme, by Nature's skill enwrought
 In the wild turf: the lingering dews of morn
 Smoke round him, as from hill to hill he hies,
 His staff protending like a hunter's spear,
 Or by its aid leaping from crag to crag,
 And o'er the brawling beds of unbridged streams.
 Philosophy, methinks, at Fancy's call,
 Might deign to follow him through what he does 250

Or sees in his day's march ; himself he feels,
 In those vast regions where his service lies,
 A freeman, wedded to his life of hope
 And hazard, and hard labour interchanged
 With that majestic indolence so dear
 To native man. A rambling schoolboy, thus
 I felt his presence in his own domain,
 As of a lord and master, or a power,
 Or genius, under Nature, under God,
 Presiding ; and severest solitude 260
 Had more commanding looks when he was there.
 When up the lonely brooks on rainy days
 Angling I went, or trod the trackless hills
 By mists bewildered, suddenly mine eyes
 Have glanced upon him distant a few steps,
 In size a giant, stalking through thick fog,
 His sheep like Greenland bears ; or, as he stepped
 Beyond the boundary line of some hill-shadow,
 His form hath flashed upon me, glorified
 By the deep radiance of the setting sun : 270
 Or him have I descried in distant sky,
 A solitary object and sublime,
 Above all height ! like an aërial cross
 Stationed alone upon a spiry rock
 Of the Chartreuse, for worship. Thus was man
 Ennobled outwardly before my sight,
 And thus my heart was early introduced
 To an unconscious love and reverence
 Of human nature ; hence the human form
 To me became an index of delight, 280
 Of grace and honour, power and worthiness.
 Meanwhile this creature—spiritual almost
 As those of books, but more exalted far ;
 Far more of an imaginative form
 Than the gay Corin of the groves, who lives
 For his own fancies, or to dance by the hour,
 In coronal, with Phyllis in the midst—
 Was, for the purposes of kind, a man
 With the most common ; husband, father ; learned,
 Could teach, admonish ; suffered with the rest 290
 From vice and folly, wretchedness and fear ;
 Of this I little saw, cared less for it,
 But something must have felt.

Call ye these appearances—
 Which I beheld of shepherds in my youth,
 This sanctity of Nature given to man—
 A shadow, a delusion, ye who pore

On the dead letter, miss the spirit of things ;
 Whose truth is not a motion or a shape
 Instinct with vital functions, but a block
 Or waxen image which yourselves have made, 300
 And ye adore ! But blessèd be the God
 Of Nature and of Man that this was so ;
 That men before my inexperienced eyes
 Did first present themselves thus purified,
 Removed, and to a distance that was fit :
 And so we all of us in some degree
 Are led to knowledge, wheresoever led,
 And howsoever ; were it otherwise,
 And we found evil fast as we find good
 In our first years, or think that it is found, 310
 How could the innocent heart bear up and live !
 But doubly fortunate my lot ; not here
 Alone, that something of a better life
 Perhaps was round me than it is the privilege
 Of most to move in, but that first I looked
 At Man through objects that were great or fair ;
 First communed with him by their help. And thus
 Was founded a sure safeguard and defence
 Against the weight of meanness, selfish cares,
 Coarse manners, vulgar passions, that beat in 320
 On all sides from the ordinary world
 In which we traffic. Starting from this point
 I had my face turned toward the truth, began
 With an advantage furnished by that kind
 Of prepossession, without which the soul
 Receives no knowledge that can bring forth good,
 No genuine insight ever comes to her.
 From the restraint of over-watchful eyes
 Preserved, I moved about, year after year,
 Happy, and now most thankful that my walk 330
 Was guarded from too early intercourse
 With the deformities of crowded life,
 And those ensuing laughters and contempts,
 Self-pleasing, which, if we would wish to think
 With a due reverence on earth's rightful lord,
 Here placed to be the inheritor of heaven,
 Will not permit us ; but pursue the mind,
 That to devotion willingly would rise,
 Into the temple and the temple's heart.

Yet deem not, Friend ! that human kind with me 340
 Thus early took a place pre-eminent ;
 Nature herself was, at this unripe time,

But secondary to my own pursuits
 And animal activities, and all
 Their trivial pleasures ; and when these had drooped
 And gradually expired, and Nature, prized
 For her own sake, became my joy, even then—
 And upwards through late youth, until not less
 Than two-and-twenty summers had been told—
 Was Man in my affections and regards 350
 Subordinate to her, her visible forms
 And viewless agencies : a passion, she,
 A rapture often, and immediate love
 Ever at hand ; he, only a delight
 Occasional, an accidental grace,
 His hour being not yet come. Far less had then
 The inferior creatures, beast or bird, attuned
 My spirit to that gentleness of love
 (Though they had long been carefully observed),
 Won from me those minute obeisances 360
 Of tenderness, which I may number now
 With my first blessings. Nevertheless, on these
 The light of beauty did not fall in vain,
 Or grandeur circumfuse them to no end.

But when that first poetic faculty
 Of plain Imagination and severe,
 No longer a mute influence of the soul,
 Ventured, at some rash Muse's earnest call,
 To try her strength among harmonious words ;
 And to book-notions and the rules of art 370
 Did knowingly conform itself ; there came
 Among the simple shapes of human life
 A wilfulness of fancy and conceit :
 And Nature and her objects beautified
 These fictions, as in some sort, in their turn,
 They burnished her. From touch of this new power
 Nothing was safe : the elder-tree that grew
 Beside the well-known charnel-house had then
 A dismal look ; the yew-tree had its ghost,
 That took his station there for ornament : 380
 The dignities of plain occurrence then
 Were tasteless, and truth's golden mean, a point
 Where no sufficient pleasure could be found.
 Then, if a widow, staggering with the blow
 Of her distress, was known to have turned her steps
 To the cold grave in which her husband slept,
 One night, or haply more than one, through pain
 Or half-insensate impotence of mind,

The fact was caught at greedily, and there
 She must be visitant the whole year through, 390
 Wetting the turf with never-ending tears.

Through quaint obliquities I might pursue
 These cravings; when the foxglove, one by one,
 Upwards through every stage of the tall stem,
 Had shed beside the public way its bells,
 And stood of all dismantled, save the last
 Left at the tapering ladder's top, that seemed
 To bend as doth a slender blade of grass
 Tipped with a rain-drop, Fancy loved to seat,
 Beneath the plant despoiled, but crested still 400
 With this last relic, soon itself to fall,
 Some vagrant mother, whose arch little ones,
 All unconcerned by her dejected plight,
 Laughed as with rival eagerness their hands
 Gathered the purple cups that round them lay,
 Strewing the turf's green slope.

A diamond light
 (Whene'er the summer sun, declining, smote
 A smooth rock wet with constant springs) was seen
 Sparkling from out a copse-clad bank that rose
 Fronting our cottage. Oft beside the hearth 410
 Seated, with open door, often and long
 Upon this restless lustre have I gazed,
 That made my fancy restless as itself.
 'Twas now for me a burnished silver shield
 Suspended over a knight's tomb, who lay
 Inglorious, buried in the dusky wood:
 An entrance now into some magic cave
 Or palace built by fairies of the rock;
 Nor could I have been bribed to disenchant
 The spectacle, by visiting the spot. 420
 Thus wilful Fancy, in no hurtful mood,
 Engrafted far-fetched shapes on feelings bred
 By pure Imagination: busy Power
 She was, and with her ready pupil turned
 Instinctively to human passions, then
 Least understood. Yet, 'mid the fervent swarm
 Of these vagaries, with an eye so rich
 As mine was through the bounty of a grand
 And lovely region, I had forms distinct
 To steady me: each airy thought revolved 430
 Round a substantial centre, which at once
 Incited it to motion, and controlled.
 I did not pine like one in cities bred,

As was thy melancholy lot, dear Friend!
 Great Spirit as thou art, in endless dreams
 Of sickliness, disjoining, joining, things
 Without the light of knowledge. Where the harm,
 If, when the woodman languished with disease
 Induced by sleeping nightly on the ground
 Within his sod-built cabin, Indian-wise, 440
 I called the pangs of disappointed love,
 And all the sad etcetera of the wrong,
 To help him to his grave? Meanwhile the man,
 If not already from the woods retired
 To die at home, was haply, as I knew,
 Withering by slow degrees, 'mid gentle airs,
 Birds, running streams, and hills so beautiful
 On golden evenings, while the charcoal pile
 Breathed up its smoke, an image of his ghost
 Or spirit that full soon must take her flight. 450
 Nor shall we not be tending towards that point
 Of sound humanity to which our Tale
 Leads, though by sinuous ways, if here I show
 How Fancy, in a season when she wove
 Those slender cords, to guide the unconscious Boy
 For the Man's sake, could feed at Nature's call
 Some pensive musings which might well beseeem
 Maturer years.

A grove there is whose boughs
 Stretch from the western marge of Thurston-mere,
 With length of shade so thick, that whoso glides 460
 Along the line of low-roofed water, moves
 As in a cloister. Once—while, in that shade
 Loitering, I watched the golden beams of light
 Flung from the setting sun, as they reposed
 In silent beauty on the naked ridge
 Of a high eastern hill—thus flowed my thoughts
 In a pure stream of words fresh from the heart:
 Dear native Regions, wheresoe'er shall close
 My mortal course, there will I think on you;
 Dying, will cast on you a backward look; 470
 Even as this setting sun (albeit the Vale
 Is no where touched by one memorial gleam)
 Doth with the fond remains of his last power
 Still linger, and a farewell lustre sheds
 On the dear mountain-tops where first he rose.

Enough of humble arguments; recall,
 My Song! those high emotions which thy voice
 Has heretofore made known; that bursting forth

Of sympathy, inspiring and inspired,
 When everywhere a vital pulse was felt, 480
 And all the several frames of things, like stars,
 Through every magnitude distinguishable,
 Shone mutually indebted, or half lost
 Each in the other's blaze, a galaxy
 Of life and glory. In the midst stood Man,
 Outwardly, inwardly contemplated,
 As, of all visible natures, crown, though born
 Of dust, and kindred to the worm ; a Being,
 Both in perception and discernment, first
 In every capability of rapture, 490
 Through the divine effect of power and love ;
 As, more than anything we know, instinct
 With godhead, and, by reason and by will,
 Acknowledging dependency sublime.

Ere long, the lonely mountains left, I moved,
 Begirt, from day to day, with temporal shapes
 Of vice and folly thrust upon my view,
 Objects of sport, and ridicule, and scorn,
 Manners and characters discriminate,
 And little bustling passions that eclipse, 500
 As well they might, the impersonated thought,
 The idea, or abstraction of the kind.

An idler among academic bowers,
 Such was my new condition, as at large
 Has been set forth ; yet here the vulgar light
 Of present, actual, superficial life,
 Gleaming through colouring of other times,
 Old usages and local privilege,
 Was welcome, softened, if not solemnised.
 This notwithstanding, being brought more near 510
 To vice and guilt, forerunning wretchedness,
 I trembled,—thought, at times, of human life
 With an indefinite terror and dismay,
 Such as the storms and angry elements
 Had bred in me ; but gloomier far, a dim
 Analogy to uproar and misrule,
 Disquiet, danger, and obscurity.

It might be told (but wherefore speak of things
 Common to all ?) that, seeing, I was led
 Gravely to ponder—judging between good 520
 And evil, not as for the mind's delight
 But for her guidance—one who was to *act*,

As sometimes to the best of feeble means
 I did, by human sympathy impelled ;
 And, through dislike and most offensive pain,
 Was to the truth conducted ; of this faith
 Never forsaken, that, by acting well,
 And understanding, I should learn to love
 The end of life, and everything we know.

Grave Teacher, stern Preceptress ! for at times 530
 Thou canst put on an aspect most severe ;
 London, to thee I willingly return.

Erewhile my verse played idly with the flowers
 Enwrought upon thy mantle ; satisfied
 With that amusement, and a simple look
 Of child-like inquisition now and then
 Cast upwards on thy countenance, to detect
 Some inner meanings which might harbour there.
 But how could I in mood so light indulge,
 Keeping such fresh remembrance of the day, 540
 When, having thridd the long labyrinth
 Of the suburban villages, I first
 Entered thy vast dominion ? On the roof
 Of an itinerant vehicle I sate,

With vulgar men about me, trivial forms
 Of houses, pavement, streets, of men and things,—
 Mean shapes on every side : but, at the instant,
 When to myself it fairly might be said,
 The threshold now is overpast, (how strange
 That aught external to the living mind 550
 Should have such mighty sway ! yet so it was),
 A weight of ages did at once descend
 Upon my heart ; no thought embodied, no
 Distinct remembrances, but weight and power,—
 Power growing under weight : alas ! I feel
 That I am trifling : 'twas a moment's pause,—
 All that took place within me came and went
 As in a moment ; yet with Time it dwells,
 And grateful memory, as a thing divine.

The curious traveller, who, from open day, 560
 Hath passed with torches into some huge cave,
 The Grotto of Antiparos, or the Den
 In old time haunted by that Danish Witch,
 Yordas ; he looks around and sees the vault
 Widening on all sides ; sees, or thinks he sees,
 Erelong, the massy roof above his head,
 That instantly unsettles and recedes,—

Substance and shadow, light and darkness, all
 Commingled, making up a canopy
 Of shapes and forms and tendencies to shape 570
 That shift and vanish, change and interchange
 Like spectres,—ferment silent and sublime !
 That after a short space works less and less,
 Till, every effort, every motion gone,
 The scene before him stands in perfect view
 Exposed, and lifeless as a written book !—
 But let him pause awhile, and look again,
 And a new quickening shall succeed, at first
 Beginning timidly, then creeping fast,
 Till the whole cave, so late a senseless mass, 580
 Busies the eye with images and forms
 Boldly assembled,—here is shadowed forth
 From the projections, wrinkles, cavities,
 A variegated landscape,—there the shape
 Of some gigantic warrior clad in mail,
 The ghostly semblance of a hooded monk,
 Veiled nun, or pilgrim resting on his staff:
 Strange congregation ! yet not slow to meet
 Eyes that perceive through minds that can inspire.

Even in such sort had I at first been moved, 590
 Nor otherwise continued to be moved,
 As I explored the vast metropolis,
 Fount of my country's destiny and the world's ;
 That great emporium, chronicle at once
 And burial-place of passions, and their home
 Imperial, their chief living residence.

With strong sensations teeming as it did
 Of past and present, such a place must needs
 Have pleased me, seeking knowledge at that time
 Far less than craving power; yet knowledge came, 600
 Sought or unsought, and influxes of power
 Came, of themselves, or at her call derived
 In fits of kindest apprehensiveness,
 From all sides, when whate'er was in itself
 Capacious found, or seemed to find, in me
 A correspondent amplitude of mind ;
 Such is the strength and glory of our youth !
 The human nature unto which I felt
 That I belonged, and revered with love,
 Was not a punctual presence, but a spirit 610
 Diffused through time and space, with aid derived
 Of evidence from monuments, erect,

Prostrate, or leaning towards their common rest
 In earth, the widely scattered wreck sublime
 Of vanished nations, or more clearly drawn
 From books and what they picture and record.

'Tis true, the history of our native land,
 With those of Greece compared and popular Rome,
 And in our high-wrought modern narratives
 Stript of their harmonising soul, the life 620
 Of manners and familiar incidents,
 Had never much delighted me. And less
 Than other intellects had mine been used
 To lean upon extrinsic circumstance
 Of record or tradition ; but a sense
 Of what in the Great City had been done
 And suffered, and was doing, suffering, still,
 Weighed with me, could support the test of thought ;
 And, in despite of all that had gone by,
 Or was departing never to return, 630
 There I conversed with majesty and power
 Like independent natures. Hence the place
 Was thronged with impregnations like the Wilds
 In which my early feelings had been nursed—
 Bare hills and valleys, full of caverns, rocks,
 And audible seclusions, dashing lakes,
 Echoes and waterfalls, and pointed crags
 That into music touch the passing wind.
 Here then my young imagination found
 No uncongenial element ; could here 640
 Among new objects serve or give command,
 Even as the heart's occasions might require,
 To forward reason's else too scrupulous march.
 The effect was, still more elevated views
 Of human nature. Neither vice nor guilt,
 Debasement undergone by body or mind,
 Nor all the misery forced upon my sight,
 Misery not lightly passed, but sometimes scanned
 Most feelingly, could overthrow my trust
 In what we *may* become ; induce belief 650
 That I was ignorant, had been falsely taught,
 A solitary, who with vain conceits
 Had been inspired, and walked about in dreams.
 From those sad scenes when meditation turned,
 Lo ! everything that was indeed divine
 Retained its purity inviolate,
 Nay brighter shone, by this portentous gloom
 Set off ; such opposition as aroused

The mind of Adam, yet in Paradise
 Though fallen from bliss, when in the East he saw 660
 Darkness ere day's mid course, and morning light
 More orient in the western cloud, that drew
 O'er the blue firmament a radiant white,
 Descending slow with something heavenly fraught.

Add also, that among the multitudes
 Of that huge city, oftentimes was seen
 Affectingly set forth, more than elsewhere
 Is possible, the unity of man,
 One spirit over ignorance and vice
 Predominant in good and evil hearts; 670
 One sense for moral judgments, as one eye
 For the sun's light. The soul when smitten thus
 By a sublime *idea*, whencesoe'er
 Vouchsafed for union or communion, feeds
 On the pure bliss, and takes her rest with God.

Thus from a very early age, O Friend!
 My thoughts by slow gradations had been drawn
 To human-kind, and to the good and ill
 Of human life: Nature had led me on;
 And oft amid the 'busy hum' I seemed 680
 To travel independent of her help,
 As if I had forgotten her; but no,
 The world of human-kind outweighed not hers
 In my habitual thoughts; the scale of love,
 Though filling daily, still was light, compared
 With that in which *her* mighty objects lay.

BOOK NINTH

RESIDENCE IN FRANCE

EVEN as a river,—partly (it might seem)
 Yielding to old remembrances, and swayed
 In part by fear to shape a way direct,
 That would engulph him soon in the ravenous sea—
 Turns, and will measure back his course, far back,
 Seeking the very regions which he crossed
 In his first outset; so have we, my Friend!
 Turned and returned with intricate delay.
 Or as a traveller, who has gained the brow

Of some ærial Down, while there he halts 10
For breathing-time, is tempted to review
The region left behind him ; and, if aught
Deserving notice have escaped regard,
Or been regarded with too careless eye,
Strives, from that height, with one and yet one more
Last look, to make the best amends he may :
So have we lingered. Now we start afresh
With courage, and new hope risen on our toil.
Fair greetings to this shapeless eagerness,
Whene'er it comes ! needful in work so long, 20
Thrice needful to the argument which now
Awaits us ! Oh, how much unlike the past !

Free as a colt at pasture on the hill,
I ranged at large, through London's wide domain,
Month after month. Obscurely did I live,
Not seeking frequent intercourse with men,
By literature, or elegance, or rank,
Distinguished. Scarcely was a year thus spent
Ere I forsook the crowded solitude,
With less regret for its luxurious pomp, 30
And all the nicely-guarded shows of art,
Than for the humble book-stalls in the streets,
Exposed to eye and hand where'er I turned.

France lured me forth ; the realm that I had crossed
So lately, journeying toward the snow-clad Alps.
But now, relinquishing the scrip and staff,
And all enjoyment which the summer sun
Sheds round the steps of those who meet the day
With motion constant as his own, I went
Prepared to sojourn in a pleasant town, 40
Washed by the current of the stately Loire.

Through Paris lay my readiest course, and there
Sojourning a few days, I visited
In haste, each spot of old or recent fame,
The latter chiefly ; from the field of Mars
Down to the suburbs of St. Antony,
And from Mont Martre southward to the Dome
Of Geneviève. In both her clamorous Halls,
The National Synod and the Jacobins,
I saw the Revolutionary Power 50
Toss like a ship at anchor, rocked by storms ;
The Arcades I traversed, in the Palace huge
Of Orleans ; coasted round and round the line

Of Tavern, Brothel, Gaming-house, and Shop,
 Great rendezvous of worst and best, the walk
 Of all who had a purpose, or had not ;
 I stared and listened, with a stranger's ears,
 To Hawkers and Haranguers, hubbub wild !
 And hissing Factionists with ardent eyes,
 In knots, or pairs, or single. Not a look 60
 Hope takes, or Doubt or Fear is forced to wear,
 But seemed there present ; and I scanned them all,
 Watched every gesture uncontrollable,
 Of anger, and vexation, and despite,
 All side by side, and struggling face to face,
 With gaiety and dissolute idleness.

Where silent zephyrs sported with the dust
 Of the Bastille, I sate in the open sun,
 And from the rubbish gathered up a stone,
 And pocketed the relic, in the guise 70
 Of an enthusiast ; yet, in honest truth,
 I looked for something that I could not find,
 Affecting more emotion than I felt ;
 For 'tis most certain, that these various sights,
 However potent their first shock, with me
 Appeared to recompense the traveller's pains
 Less than the painted Magdalene of Le Brun,
 A beauty exquisitely wrought, with hair
 Dishevelled, gleaming eyes, and rueful cheek
 Pale and bedropt with everflowing tears. 80

But hence to my more permanent abode
 I hasten ; there, by novelties in speech,
 Domestic manners, customs, gestures, looks,
 And all the attire of ordinary life,
 Attention was engrossed ; and, thus amused,
 I stood, 'mid those concussions, unconcerned,
 Tranquil almost, and careless as a flower
 Glassed in a greenhouse, or a parlour shrub
 That spreads its leaves in unmolested peace,
 While every bush and tree, the country through, 90
 Is shaking to the roots : indifference this
 Which may seem strange : but I was unprepared
 With needful knowledge, had abruptly passed
 Into a theatre, whose stage was filled
 And busy with an action far advanced.
 Like others, I had skimmed, and sometimes read
 With care, the master-pamphlets of the day ;
 Nor wanted such half-insight as grew wild

Upon that meagre soil, helped out by talk
 And public news; but having never seen 100
 A chronicle that might suffice to show
 Whence the main organs of the public power
 Had sprung, their transmigrations, when and how
 Accomplished, giving thus unto events
 A form and body; all things were to me
 Loose and disjointed, and the affections left
 Without a vital interest. At that time,
 Moreover, the first storm was overblown,
 And the strong hand of outward violence
 Locked up in quiet. For myself, I fear 110
 Now, in connection with so great a theme,
 To speak (as I must be compelled to do)
 Of one so unimportant; night by night
 Did I frequent the formal haunts of men,
 Whom, in the city, privilege of birth
 Sequestered from the rest, societies
 Polished in arts, and in punctilio versed;
 Whence, and from deeper causes, all discourse
 Of good and evil of the time was shunned
 With scrupulous care; but these restrictions soon 120
 Proved tedious, and I gradually withdrew
 Into a noisier world, and thus ere long
 Became a patriot; and my heart was all
 Given to the people, and my love was theirs.

A band of military Officers,
 Then stationed in the city, were the chief
 Of my associates: some of these wore swords
 That had been seasoned in the wars, and all
 Were men well-born; the chivalry of France.
 In age and temper differing, they had yet 130
 One spirit ruling in each heart; alike
 (Save only one, hereafter to be named)
 Were bent upon undoing what was done:
 This was their rest and only hope; therewith
 No fear had they of bad becoming worse,
 For worst to them was come; nor would have stirred,
 Or deemed it worth a moment's thought to stir,
 In anything, save only as the act
 Looked thitherward. One, reckoning by years,
 Was in the prime of manhood, and erewhile 140
 He had sate lord in many tender hearts;
 Though heedless of such honours now, and changed:
 His temper was quite mastered by the times,
 And they had blighted him, had eaten away

The beauty of his person, doing wrong
 Alike to body and to mind : his port,
 Which once had been erect and open, now
 Was stooping and contracted, and a face,
 Endowed by Nature with her fairest gifts
 Of symmetry and light and bloom, expressed, 150
 As much as any that was ever seen,
 A ravage out of season, made by thoughts
 Unhealthy and vexatious. With the hour,
 That from the press of Paris duly brought
 Its freight of public news, the fever came,
 A punctual visitant, to shake this man,
 Disarmed his voice and fanned his yellow cheek
 Into a thousand colours ; while he read,
 Or mused, his sword was haunted by his touch
 Continually, like an uneasy place 160
 In his own body. 'Twas in truth an hour
 Of universal ferment ; mildest men
 Were agitated ; and commotions, strife
 Of passion and opinion, filled the walls
 Of peaceful houses with unquiet sounds.
 The soil of common life, was, at that time,
 Too hot to tread upon. Oft said I then,
 And not then only, 'What a mockery this
 Of history, the past and that to come !
 Now do I feel how all men are deceived, 170
 Reading of nations and their works, in faith,
 Faith given to vanity and emptiness ;
 Oh ! laughter for the page that would reflect
 To future times the face of what now is !'
 The land all swarmed with passion, like a plain
 Devoured by locusts,—Carra, Gorsas,—add
 A hundred other names, forgotten now,
 Nor to be heard of more ; yet, they were powers,
 Like earthquakes, shocks repeated day by day,
 And felt through every nook of town and field. 180

Such was the state of things. Meanwhile the chief
 Of my associates stood prepared for flight
 To augment the band of emigrants in arms
 Upon the borders of the Rhine, and leagued
 With foreign foes mustered for instant war.
 This was their undisguised intent, and they
 Were waiting with the whole of their desires
 The moment to depart.

An Englishman,
 Born in a land whose very name appeared

To license some unruliness of mind ;
A stranger, with youth's further privilege,
And the indulgence that a half-learnt speech
Wins from the courteous ; I, who had been else
Shunned and not tolerated, freely lived
With these defenders of the Crown, and talked,
And heard their notions ; nor did they disdain
The wish to bring me over to their cause. 190

But though untaught by thinking or by books
To reason well of polity or law,
And nice distinctions, then on every tongue,
Of natural rights and civil ; and to acts 200
Of nations and their passing interests,
(If with unworldly ends and aims compared)
Almost indifferent, even the historian's tale
Prizing but little otherwise than I prized
Tales of the poets, as it made the heart
Beat high, and filled the fancy with fair forms,
Old heroes and their sufferings and their deeds ;
Yet in the regal sceptre, and the pomp
Of orders and degrees, I nothing found 210
Then, or had ever, even in crudest youth,
That dazzled me, but rather what I mourned
And ill could brook, beholding that the best
Ruled not, and feeling that they ought to rule.

For, born in a poor district, and which yet
Retaineth more of ancient homeliness,
Than any other nook of English ground,
It was my fortune scarcely to have seen,
Through the whole tenor of my schoolday time,
The face of one, who, whether boy or man, 220
Was vested with attention or respect
Through claims of wealth or blood ; nor was it least
Of many benefits, in later years
Derived from academic institutes
And rules, that they held something up to view
Of a Republic, where all stood thus far
Upon equal ground ; that we were brothers all
In honour, as in one community,
Scholars and gentlemen ; where, furthermore,
Distinction open lay to all that came, 230
And wealth and titles were in less esteem
Than talents, worth, and prosperous industry.
Add unto this, subservience from the first
To presences of God's mysterious power

Made manifest in Nature's sovereignty,
 And fellowship with venerable books,
 To sanction the proud workings of the soul,
 And mountain liberty. It could not be
 But that one tutored thus should look with awe
 Upon the faculties of man, receive 240
 Gladly the highest promises, and hail,
 As best, the government of equal rights
 And individual worth. And hence, O Friend !
 If at the first great outbreak I rejoiced
 Less than might well befit my youth, the cause
 In part lay here, that unto me the events
 Seemed nothing out of nature's certain course,
 A gift that was come rather late than soon.
 No wonder, then, if advocates like these,
 Inflamed by passion, blind with prejudice, 250
 And stung with injury, at this riper day,
 Were impotent to make my hopes put on
 The shape of theirs, my understanding bend
 In honour to their honour : zeal, which yet
 Had slumbered, now in opposition burst
 Forth like a Polar summer : every word
 They uttered was a dart, by counter-winds
 Blown back upon themselves ; their reason seemed
 Confusion-stricken by a higher power
 Than human understanding, their discourse 260
 Maimed, spiritless ; and, in their weakness strong,
 I triumphed.

Meantime, day by day, the roads
 Were crowded with the bravest youth of France,
 And all the promptest of her spirits, linked
 In gallant soldiership, and posting on
 To meet the war upon her frontier bounds.
 Yet at this very moment do tears start
 Into mine eyes : I do not say I weep—
 I wept not then,—but tears have dimmed my sight,
 In memory of the farewells of that time, 270
 Domestic severings, female fortitude
 At dearest separation, patriot love
 And self-devotion, and terrestrial hope,
 Encouraged with a martyr's confidence ;
 Even files of strangers merely seen but once,
 And for a moment, men from far with sound
 Of music, martial tunes, and banners spread,
 Entering the city, here and there a face,
 Or person singled out among the rest,
 Yet still a stranger and beloved as such ; 280

Even by these passing spectacles my heart
 Was oftentimes uplifted, and they seemed
 Arguments sent from Heaven to prove the cause
 Good, pure, which no one could stand up against,
 Who was not lost, abandoned, selfish, proud,
 Mean, miserable, wilfully depraved,
 Hater perverse of equity and truth.

Among that band of Officers was one,
 Already hinted at, of other mould—
 A patriot, thence rejected by the rest, 290
 And with an oriental loathing spurned,
 As of a different caste. A meeker man
 Than this lived never, nor a more benign,
 Meek though enthusiastic. Injuries
 Made *him* more gracious, and his nature then
 Did breathe its sweetness out most sensibly,
 As aromatic flowers on Alpine turf,
 When foot hath crushed them. He through the events
 Of that great change wandered in perfect faith,
 As through a book, an old romance, or tale 300
 Of Fairy, or some dream of actions wrought
 Behind the summer clouds. By birth he ranked
 With the most noble, but unto the poor
 Among mankind he was in service bound,
 As by some tie invisible, oaths professed
 To a religious order. Man he loved
 As man; and, to the mean and the obscure,
 And all the homely in their homely works,
 Transferred a courtesy which had no air
 Of condescension; but did rather seem 310
 A passion and a gallantry, like that
 Which he, a soldier, in his idler day
 Had paid to woman: somewhat vain he was,
 Or seemed so, yet it was not vanity,
 But fondness, and a kind of radiant joy
 Diffused around him, while he was intent
 On works of love or freedom, or revolved
 Complacently the progress of a cause,
 Whereof he was a part: yet this was meek
 And placid, and took nothing from the man 320
 That was delightful. Oft in solitude
 With him did I discourse about the end
 Of civil government, and its wisest forms;
 Of ancient loyalty, and chartered rights,
 Custom and habit, novelty and change;
 Of self-respect, and virtue in the few

For patrimonial honour set apart,
 And ignorance in the labouring multitude.
 For he, to all intolerance indisposed,
 Balanced these contemplations in his mind ; 330
 And I, who at that time was scarcely dipped
 Into the turmoil, bore a sounder judgment
 Than later days allowed ; carried about me,
 With less alloy to its integrity,
 The experience of past ages, as, through help
 Of books and common life, it makes sure way
 To youthful minds, by objects over near
 Not pressed upon, nor dazzled or misled
 By struggling with the crowd for present ends.

But though not deaf, nor obstinate to find 340
 Error without excuse upon the side
 Of them who strove against us, more delight
 We took, and let this freely be confessed,
 In painting to ourselves the miseries
 Of royal courts, and that voluptuous life
 Unfeeling, where the man who is of soul
 The meanest thrives the most ; where dignity,
 True personal dignity, abideth not ;
 A light, a cruel, and vain world cut off
 From the natural inlets of just sentiment, 350
 From lowly sympathy and chastening truth ;
 Where good and evil interchange their names,
 And thirst for bloody spoils abroad is paired
 With vice at home. We added dearest themes—
 Man and his noble nature, as it is
 The gift which God has placed within his power,
 His blind desires and steady faculties
 Capable of clear truth, the one to break
 Bondage, the other to build liberty
 On firm foundations, making social life, 360
 Through knowledge spreading and imperishable,
 As just in regulation, and as pure
 As individual in the wise and good.

We summoned up the honourable deeds
 Of ancient Story, thought of each bright spot,
 That would be found in all recorded time,
 Of truth preserved and error passed away ;
 Of single spirits that catch the flame from Heaven,
 And how the multitudes of men will feed
 And fan each other ; thought of sects, how keen 370
 They are to put the appropriate nature on,
 Triumphant over every obstacle

Of custom, language, country, love, or hate,
 And what they do and suffer for their creed ;
 How far they travel, and how long endure ;
 How quickly mighty Nations have been formed,
 From least beginnings ; how, together locked
 By new opinions, scattered tribes have made
 One body, spreading wide as clouds in heaven.
 To aspirations then of our own minds 380
 Did we appeal ; and, finally, beheld
 A living confirmation of the whole
 Before us, in a people from the depth
 Of shameful imbecility uprisen,
 Fresh as the morning star. Elate we looked
 Upon their virtues ; saw, in rudest men,
 Self-sacrifice the firmest ; generous love,
 And continence of mind, and sense of right,
 Uppermost in the midst of fiercest strife.

Oh, sweet it is, in academic groves, 390
 Or such retirement, Friend ! as we have known
 In the green dales beside our Rotha's stream,
 Greta, or Derwent, or some nameless rill,
 To ruminate, with interchange of talk,
 On rational liberty, and hope in man,
 Justice and peace. But far more sweet such toil—
 Toil, say I, for it leads to thoughts abstruse—
 If nature then be standing on the brink
 Of some great trial, and we hear the voice
 Of one devoted,—one whom circumstance 400
 Hath called upon to embody his deep sense
 In action, give it outwardly a shape,
 And that of benediction, to the world.
 Then doubt is not, and truth is more than truth,—
 A hope it is, and a desire ; a creed
 Of zeal, by an authority Divine
 Sanctioned, of danger, difficulty, or death.
 Such conversation, under Attic shades,
 Did Dion hold with Plato ; ripened thus
 For a deliverer's glorious task,—and such 410
 He, on that ministry already bound,
 Held with Eudemus and Timonides,
 Surrounded by adventurers in arms,
 When those two vessels with their daring freight,
 For the Sicilian Tyrant's overthrow,
 Sailed from Zacynthus,—philosophic war,
 Led by Philosophers. With harder fate,
 Though like ambition, such was he, O Friend !

Of whom I speak. So BEAUPUY (let the name
 Stand near the worthiest of Antiquity)
 Fashioned his life; and many a long discourse,
 With like persuasion honoured, we maintained:
 He, on his part, accoutred for the worst,
 He perished fighting, in supreme command,
 Upon the borders of the unhappy Loire,
 For liberty, against deluded men,
 His fellow country-men; and yet most blessed
 In this, that he the fate of later times
 Lived not to see, nor what we now behold,
 Who have as ardent hearts as he had then.

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Along that very Loire, with festal mirth
 Resounding at all hours, and innocent yet
 Of civil slaughter, was our frequent walk;
 Or in wide forests of continuous shade,
 Lofty and over-arched, with open space
 Beneath the trees, clear footing many a mile—
 A solemn region. Oft amid those haunts,
 From earnest dialogues I slipped in thought,
 And let remembrance steal to other times,
 When o'er those interwoven roots, moss-clad,
 And smooth as marble or a waveless sea,
 Some Hermit, from his cell forth-strayed, might pace
 In sylvan meditation undisturbed;
 As on the pavement of a Gothic church
 Walks a lone Monk, when service hath expired,
 In peace and silence. But if e'er was heard,—
 Heard, though unseen,—a devious traveller,
 Retiring or approaching from afar
 With speed and echoes loud of trampling hoofs
 From the hard floor reverberated, then
 It was Angelica thundering through the woods
 Upon her palfrey, or that gentle maid
 Erminia, fugitive as fair as she.
 Sometimes methought I saw a pair of knights
 Joust underneath the trees, that as in storm
 Rocked high above their heads; anon, the din
 Of boisterous merriment, and music's roar,
 In sudden proclamation, burst from haunt
 Of Satyrs in some viewless glade, with dance
 Rejoicing o'er a female in the midst,
 A mortal beauty, their unhappy thrall.
 The width of those huge forests, unto me
 A novel scene, did often in this way
 Master my fancy while I wandered on

440

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460

With that revered companion. And sometimes—
 When to a convent in a meadow green,
 By a brook-side, we came, a roofless pile,
 And not by reverential touch of Time
 Dismantled, but by violence abrupt—
 In spite of those heart-bracing colloquies, 470
 In spite of real fervour, and of that
 Less genuine and wrought up within myself—
 I could not but bewail a wrong so harsh,
 And for the *Matin*-bell to sound no more
 Grieved, and the twilight taper, and the cross
 High on the topmost pinnacle, a sign
 (How welcome to the weary traveller's eyes!)
 Of hospitality and peaceful rest.
 And when the partner of those varied walks
 Pointed upon occasion to the site 480
 Of Romorentin, home of ancient kings,
 To the imperial edifice of Blois,
 Or to that rural castle, name now slipped
 From my remembrance, where a lady lodged,
 By the first Francis wooed, and, bound to him
 In chains of mutual passion, from the tower,
 As a tradition of the country tells,
 Practised to commune with her royal knight
 By cressets and love-beacons, intercourse
 'Twixt her high-seated residence and his 490
 Far off at Chambord on the plain beneath;
 Even here, though less than with the peaceful house
 Religious, 'mid those frequent monuments
 Of Kings, their vices and their better deeds,
 Imagination, potent to inflame
 At times with virtuous wrath and noble scorn,
 Did also often mitigate the force
 Of civic prejudice, the bigotry,
 So call it, of a youthful patriot's mind;
 And on these spots with many gleams I looked 500
 Of chivalrous delight. Yet not the less,
 Hatred of absolute rule, where will of one
 Is law for all, and of that barren pride
 In them who, by immunities unjust,
 Between the sovereign and the people stand,
 His helper and not theirs, laid stronger hold
 Daily upon me, mixed with pity too
 And love; for where hope is, there love will be
 For the abject multitude. And when we chanced
 One day to meet a hunger-bitten girl, 510
 Who crept along fitting her languid gait

Unto a heifer's motion, by a cord
 Tied to her arm, and picking thus from the lane
 Its sustenance, while the girl with pallid hands
 Was busy knitting in a heartless mood
 Of solitude, and at the sight my friend
 In agitation said, 'Tis against *that*
 That we are fighting, I with him believed
 That a benignant spirit was abroad
 Which might not be withstood, that poverty 520
 Abject as this would in a little time
 Be found no more, that we should see the earth
 Unthwarted in her wish to recompense
 The meek, the lowly, patient child of toil,
 All institutes for ever blotted out
 That legalised exclusion, empty pomp
 Abolished, sensual state and cruel power,
 Whether by edict of the one or few;
 And finally, as sum and crown of all,
 Should see the people having a strong hand 530
 In framing their own laws; whence better days
 To all mankind. But, these things set apart,
 Was not this single confidence enough
 To animate the mind that ever turned
 A thought to human welfare,—that, henceforth
 Captivity by mandate without law
 Should cease; and open accusation lead
 To sentence in the hearing of the world,
 And open punishment; if not, the air
 Be free to breathe in, and the heart of man 540
 Dread nothing? From this height I shall not stoop
 To humbler matter that detained us oft
 In thought or conversation, public acts,
 And public persons, and emotions wrought
 Within the breast, as ever-varying winds
 Of record or report swept over us;
 But I might here, instead, repeat a tale,
 Told by my Patriot friend, of sad events,
 That prove to what low depth had struck the roots,
 How widely spread the boughs, of that old tree 550
 Which, as a deadly mischief, and a foul
 And black dishonour, France was weary of.

O, happy time of youthful lovers, (thus
 The story might begin,) oh, balmy time,
 In which a love-knot on a lady's brow
 Is fairer than the fairest star in Heaven!
 So might—and with that prelude *did* begin

The record ; and, in faithful verse, was given
The doleful sequel.

But our little bark
On a strong river boldly hath been launched ; 560
And from the driving current should we turn
To loiter wilfully within a creek,
Howe'er attractive, Fellow voyager !
Wouldst thou not chide ? Yet deem not my pains lost :
For Vaudracour and Julia (so were named
The ill-fated pair) in that plain tale will draw
Tears from the hearts of others, when their own
Shall beat no more. Thou, also, there may'st read,
At leisure, how the enamoured youth was driven,
By public power abased, to fatal crime, 570
Nature's rebellion against monstrous law ;
How, between heart and heart, oppression thrust
Her mandates, severing whom true love had joined,
Harassing both ; until he sank and pressed
The couch his fate had made for him ; supine,
Save when the stings of viperous remorse,
Trying their strength, enforced him to start up,
Aghast and prayerless. Into a deep wood
He fled, to shun the haunts of human kind ;
There dwelt, weakened in spirit more and more ; 580
Nor could the voice of Freedom, which through France
Full speedily resounded, public hope,
Or personal memory of his own worst wrongs,
Rouse him ; but, hidden in those gloomy shades,
His days he wasted,—an imbecile mind.

BOOK TENTH

RESIDENCE IN FRANCE—(*continued*)

IT was a beautiful and silent day
That overspread the countenance of earth,
Then fading with unusual quietness,—
A day as beautiful as e'er was given
To soothe regret, though deepening what it soothed,
When by the gliding Loire I passed, and cast
Upon his rich domains, vineyard and tilth,
Green meadow-ground, and many-coloured woods,
Again, and yet again, a farewell look ;
Then from the quiet of that scene passed on, 10

Bound to the fierce Metropolis. From his throne
 The King had fallen, and that invading host—
 Presumptuous cloud, on whose black front was written
 The tender mercies of the dismal wind
 That bore it—on the plains of Liberty
 Had burst innocuous. Say in bolder words,
 They—who had come elate as eastern hunters
 Banded beneath the Great Mogul, when he
 Erewhile went forth from Agra or Lahore,
 Rajahs and Omrahs in his train, intent 20
 To drive their prey enclosed within a ring
 Wide as a province, but, the signal given,
 Before the point of the life-threatening spear
 Narrowing itself by moments—they, rash men,
 Had seen the anticipated quarry turned
 Into avengers, from whose wrath they fled
 In terror. Disappointment and dismay
 Remained for all whose fancies had run wild
 With evil expectations; confidence
 And perfect triumph for the better cause. 30

The State, as if to stamp the final seal
 On her security, and to the world
 Show what she was, a high and fearless soul,
 Exulting in defiance, or heart-stung
 By sharp resentment, or belike to taunt
 With spiteful gratitude the baffled League,
 That had stirred up her slackening faculties
 To a new transition, when the King was crushed,
 Spared not the empty throne, and in proud haste
 Assumed the body and venerable name 40
 Of a Republic. Lamentable crimes,
 'Tis true, had gone before this hour, dire work
 Of massacre, in which the senseless sword
 Was prayed to as a judge; but these were past,
 Earth free from them for ever, as was thought,—
 Ephemeral monsters, to be seen but once!
 Things that could only show themselves and die.

Cheered with this hope, to Paris I returned,
 And ranged, with ardour heretofore unfelt,
 The spacious city, and in progress passed 50
 The prison where the unhappy Monarch lay,
 Associate with his children and his wife
 In bondage; and the palace, lately stormed
 With roar of cannon by a furious host.
 I crossed the square (an empty area then!)

Of the Carrousel, where so late had lain
 The dead, upon the dying heaped, and gazed
 On this and other spots, as doth a man
 Upon a volume whose contents he knows
 Are memorable, but from him locked up, 60
 Being written in a tongue he cannot read,
 So that he questions the mute leaves with pain,
 And half upbraids their silence. But that night
 I felt most deeply in what world I was,
 What ground I trod on, and what air I breathed.
 High was my room and lonely, near the roof
 Of a large mansion or hotel, a lodge
 That would have pleased me in more quiet times ;
 Nor was it wholly without pleasure then.
 With unextinguished taper I kept watch, 70
 Reading at intervals ; the fear gone by
 Pressed on me almost like a fear to come.
 I thought of those September massacres,
 Divided from me by one little month,
 Saw them and touched : the rest was conjured up
 From tragic fictions or true history,
 Remembrances and dim admonishments.
 The horse is taught his manage, and no star
 Of wildest course but treads back his own steps ;
 For the spent hurricane the air provides 80
 As fierce a successor ; the tide retreats
 But to return out of its hiding-place
 In the great deep ; all things have second birth ;
 The earthquake is not satisfied at once ;
 And in this way I wrought upon myself,
 Until I seemed to hear a voice that cried,
 To the whole city, 'Sleep no more.' The trance
 Fled with the voice to which it had given birth ;
 But vainly comments of a calmer mind
 Promised soft peace and sweet forgetfulness. 90
 The place, all hushed and silent as it was,
 Appeared unfit for the repose of night,
 Defenceless as a wood where tigers roam.

With early morning towards the Palace-walk
 Of Orleans eagerly I turned ; as yet
 The streets were still ; not so those long Arcades ;
 There, 'mid a peal of ill-matched sounds and cries,
 That greeted me on entering, I could hear
 Shrill voices from the hawkers in the throng,
 Bawling, 'Denunciation of the Crimes
 Of Maximilian Robespierre' ; the hand, 100

Prompt as the voice, held forth a printed speech,
 The same that had been recently pronounced,
 When Robespierre, not ignorant for what mark
 Some words of indirect reproof had been
 Intended, rose in hardihood, and dared
 The man who had an ill surmise of him
 To bring his charge in openness; whereat,
 When a dead pause ensued, and no one stirred,
 In silence of all present, from his seat
 Louvet walked single through the avenue,
 And took his station in the Tribune, saying,
 'I, Robespierre, accuse thee!' Well is known
 The inglorious issue of that charge, and how
 He, who had launched the startling thunderbolt,
 The one bold man, whose voice the attack had sounded,
 Was left without a follower to discharge
 His perilous duty, and retire lamenting
 That Heaven's best aid is wasted upon men
 Who to themselves are false.

110

But these are things 120

Of which I speak, only as they were storm
 Or sunshine to my individual mind,
 No further. Let me then relate that now—
 In some sort seeing with my proper eyes
 That Liberty, and Life, and Death would soon
 To the remotest corners of the land
 Lie in the arbitrement of those who ruled
 The capital City; what was struggled for,
 And by what combatants victory must be won;
 The indecision on their part whose aim
 Seemed best, and the straightforward path of those
 Who in attack or in defence were strong
 Through their impiety—my inmost soul
 Was agitated; yea, I could almost
 Have prayed that throughout earth upon all men,
 By patient exercise of reason made
 Worthy of liberty, all spirits filled
 With zeal expanding in Truth's holy light,
 The gift of tongues might fall, and power arrive
 From the four quarters of the winds to do
 For France, what without help she could not do,
 A work of honour; think not that to this
 I added, work of safety: from all doubt
 Or trepidation for the end of things
 Far was I, far as angels are from guilt.

130

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Yet did I grieve, nor only grieved, but thought

Of opposition and of remedies :

An insignificant stranger and obscure,
 And one, moreover, little graced with power
 Of eloquence even in my native speech, 150
 And all unfit for tumult or intrigue,
 Yet would I at this time with willing heart
 Have undertaken for a cause so great
 Service however dangerous. I revolved,
 How much the destiny of Man had still
 Hung upon single persons ; that there was,
 Transcendent to all local patrimony,
 One nature, as there is one sun in heaven ;
 That objects, even as they are great, thereby
 Do come within the reach of humblest eyes ; 160
 That Man is only weak through his mistrust
 And want of hope where evidence divine
 Proclaims to him that hope should be most sure ;
 Nor did the inexperience of my youth
 Preclude conviction, that a spirit strong
 In hope, and trained to noble aspirations,
 A spirit thoroughly faithful to itself,
 Is for Society's unreasoning herd
 A domineering instinct, serves at once
 For way and guide, a fluent receptacle 170
 That gathers up each petty straggling rill
 And vein of water, glad to be rolled on
 In safe obedience ; that a mind, whose rest
 Is where it ought to be, in self-restraint,
 In circumspection and simplicity,
 Falls rarely in entire discomfiture
 Below its aim, or meets with, from without,
 A treachery that foils it or defeats ;
 And, lastly, if the means on human will,
 Frail human will, dependent should betray 180
 Him who too boldly trusted them, I felt
 That 'mid the loud distractions of the world
 A sovereign voice subsists within the soul,
 Arbiter undisturbed of right and wrong,
 Of life and death, in majesty severe
 Enjoining, as may best promote the aims
 Of truth and justice, either sacrifice,
 From whatsoever region of our cares
 Or our infirm affections Nature pleads,
 Earnest and blind, against the stern decree. 190

On the other side, I called to mind those truths
 That are the commonplaces of the schools—

(A theme for boys, too hackneyed for their sires,)
 Yet, with a revelation's liveliness,
 In all their comprehensive bearings known
 And visible to philosophers of old,
 Men who, to business of the world untrained,
 Lived in the shade ; and to Harmodius known
 And his compeer Aristogiton, known
 To Brutus—that tyrannic power is weak, 200
 Hath neither gratitude, nor faith, nor love,
 Nor the support of good or evil men
 To trust in ; that the godhead which is ours
 Can never utterly be charmed or stilled ;
 That nothing hath a natural right to last
 But equity and reason ; that all else
 Meets foes irreconcilable, and at best
 Lives only by variety of disease.

Well might my wishes be intense, my thoughts
 Strong and perturbed, not doubting at that time 210
 But that the virtue of one paramount mind
 Would have abashed those impious crests—have
 quelled
 Outrage and bloody power, and—in despite
 Of what the People long had been and were
 Through ignorance and false teaching, sadder proof
 Of immaturity, and—in the teeth
 Of desperate opposition from without—
 Have cleared a passage for just government,
 And left a solid birthright to the State,
 Redeemed, according to example given 220
 By ancient lawgivers.

In this frame of mind,
 Dragged by a chain of harsh necessity,
 So seemed it,—now I thankfully acknowledge,
 Forced by the gracious providence of Heaven,—
 To England I returned, else (though assured
 That I both was and must be of small weight,
 No better than a landsman on the deck
 Of a ship struggling with a hideous storm)
 Doubtless, I should have then made common cause
 With some who perished ; haply perished too, 230
 A poor mistaken and bewildered offering,—
 Should to the breast of Nature have gone back,
 With all my resolutions, all my hopes,
 A Poet only to myself, to men
 Useless, and even, beloved Friend ! a soul
 To thee unknown !

Twice had the trees let fall
 Their leaves, as often Winter had put on
 His hoary crown, since I had seen the surge
 Beat against Albion's shore, since ear of mine
 Had caught the accents of my native speech 240
 Upon our native country's sacred ground.
 A patriot of the world, how could I glide
 Into communion with her sylvan shades,
 Erewhile my tuneful haunt? It pleased me more
 To abide in the great City, where I found
 The general air still busy with the stir
 Of that first memorable onset made
 By a strong levy of humanity
 Upon the traffickers in Negro blood;
 Effort which, though defeated, had recalled 250
 To notice old forgotten principles,
 And through the nation spread a novel heat
 Of virtuous feeling. For myself, I own
 That this particular strife had wanted power
 To rivet my affections; nor did now
 Its unsuccessful issue much excite
 My sorrow; for I brought with me the faith
 That, if France prospered, good men would not long
 Pay fruitless worship to humanity,
 And this most rotten branch of human shame, 260
 Object, so seemed it, of superfluous pains,
 Would fall together with its parent tree.
 What, then, were my emotions, when in arms
 Britain put forth her freeborn strength in league,
 Oh, pity and shame! with those confederate Powers!
 Not in my single self alone I found,
 But in the minds of all ingenuous youth,
 Change and subversion from that hour. No shock
 Given to my moral nature had I known
 Down to that very moment; neither lapse 270
 Nor turn of sentiment that might be named
 A revolution, save at this one time;
 All else was progress on the self-same path
 On which, with a diversity of pace,
 I had been travelling: this a stride at once
 Into another region. As a light
 And pliant harebell, swinging in the breeze
 On some grey rock—its birthplace—so had I
 Wantoned, fast rooted on the ancient tower
 Of my beloved country, wishing not 280
 A happier fortune than to wither there:
 Now was I from that pleasant station torn

And tossed about in whirlwind. I rejoiced,
 Yea, afterwards—truth most painful to record!—
 Exulted, in the triumph of my soul,
 When Englishmen by thousands were o'erthrown,
 Left without glory on the field, or driven,
 Brave hearts! to shameful flight. It was a grief,—
 Grief call it not, 'twas anything but that,—
 A conflict of sensations without name, 290
 Of which *he* only, who may love the sight
 Of a village steeple, as I do, can judge,
 When, in the congregation bending all
 To their great Father, prayers were offered up,
 Or praises for our country's victories;
 And, 'mid the simple worshippers, perchance
 I only, like an uninvited guest
 Whom no one owned, sate silent,—shall I add,
 Fed on the day of vengeance yet to come?

Oh! much have they to account for, who could tear,
 By violence, at one decisive rent, 301
 From the best youth in England their dear pride,
 Their joy, in England; this, too, at a time
 In which worst losses easily might wear
 The best of names, when patriotic love
 Did of itself in modesty give way,
 Like the Precursor when the Deity
 Is come Whose harbinger he was; a time
 In which apostasy from ancient faith
 Seemed but conversion to a higher creed; 310
 Withal a season dangerous and wild,
 A time when sage Experience would have snatched
 Flowers out of any hedge-row to compose
 A chaplet in contempt of his grey locks.

When the proud fleet that bears the red-cross flag
 In that unworthy service was prepared
 To mingle, I beheld the vessels lie,
 A brood of gallant creatures, on the deep;
 I saw them in their rest, a sojourner
 Through a whole month of calm and glassy days 320
 In that delightful island which protects
 Their place of convocation—there I heard,
 Each evening, pacing by the still sea-shore,
 A monitory sound that never failed,—
 The sunset cannon. While the orb went down
 In the tranquillity of nature, came
 That voice, ill requiem! seldom heard by me

Without a spirit overcast by dark
 Imaginations, sense of woes to come,
 Sorrow for human kind, and pain of heart. 330

In France, the men, who, for their desperate ends,
 Had plucked up mercy by the roots, were glad
 Of this new enemy. Tyrants, strong before
 In wicked pleas, were strong as demons now ;
 And thus, on every side beset with foes,
 The goaded land waxed mad ; the crimes of few
 Spread into madness of the many ; blasts
 From hell came sanctified like airs from heaven.
 The sternness of the just, the faith of those
 Who doubted not that Providence had times 340
 Of vengeful retribution, theirs who throned
 The human Understanding paramount
 And made of that their God, the hopes of men
 Who were content to barter short-lived pangs
 For a paradise of ages, the blind rage
 Of insolent tempers, the light vanity
 Of intermeddlers, steady purposes
 Of the suspicious, slips of the indiscreet,
 And all the accidents of life were pressed
 Into one service, busy with one work. 350
 The Senate stood aghast, her prudence quenched,
 Her wisdom stifled, and her justice scared,
 Her frenzy only active to extol
 Past outrages, and shape the way for new,
 Which no one dared to oppose or mitigate.

Domestic carnage now filled the whole year
 With feast-days ; old men from the chimney-nook,
 The maiden from the bosom of her love,
 The mother from the cradle of her babe,
 The warrior from the field—all perished, all— 360
 Friends, enemies, of all parties, ages, ranks,
 Head after head, and never heads enough
 For those that bade them fall. They found their joy,
 They made it proudly, eager as a child,
 (If like desires of innocent little ones
 May with such heinous appetites be compared),
 Pleased in some open field to exercise
 A toy that mimics with revolving wings
 The motion of a wind-mill ; though the air
 Do of itself blow fresh, and make the vanes 370
 Spin in his eyesight, *that* contents him not,
 But, with the plaything at arm's length, he sets

His front against the blast, and runs amain,
That it may whirl the faster.

Amid the depth

Of those enormities, even thinking minds
Forgot, at seasons, whence they had their being ;
Forgot that such a sound was ever heard
As Liberty upon earth : yet all beneath
Her innocent authority was wrought,
Nor could have been, without her blessèd name. 380
The illustrious wife of Roland, in the hour
Of her composure, felt that agony,
And gave it vent in her last words. O Friend !
It was a lamentable time for man,
Whether a hope had e'er been his or not :
A woful time for them whose hopes survived
The shock ; most woful for those few who still
Were flattered, and had trust in human kind :
They had the deepest feeling of the grief.
Meanwhile the Invaders fared as they deserved : 390
The Herculean Commonwealth had put forth her arms,
And throttled with an infant godhead's might
The snakes about her cradle ; that was well,
And as it should be ; yet no cure for them
Whose souls were sick with pain of what would be
Hereafter brought in charge against mankind.
Most melancholy at that time, O Friend !
Were my day-thoughts,—my nights were miserable ;
Through months, through years, long after the last beat
Of those atrocities, the hour of sleep 400
To me came rarely charged with natural gifts :
Such ghastly visions had I of despair
And tyranny, and implements of death ;
And innocent victims sinking under fear,
And momentary hope, and worn-out prayer,
Each in his separate cell, or penned in crowds
For sacrifice, and struggling with fond mirth
And levity in dungeons, where the dust
Was laid with tears. Then suddenly the scene
Changed, and the unbroken dream entangled me 410
In long orations, which I strove to plead
Before unjust tribunals,—with a voice
Labouring, a brain confounded, and a sense,
Death-like, of treacherous desertion, felt
In the last place of refuge—my own soul.

When I began in youth's delightful prime
To yield myself to Nature, when that strong

And holy passion overcame me first,
 Nor day nor night, evening or morn, was free
 From its oppression. But, O Power Supreme! 420
 Without Whose call this world would cease to breathe,
 Who from the Fountain of Thy grace dost fill
 The veins that branch through every frame of life,
 Making man what he is, creature divine,
 In single or in social eminence,
 Above the rest raised infinite ascents
 When reason that enables him to be
 Is not sequestered—what a change is here!
 How different ritual for this after-worship,
 What countenance to promote this second love! 430
 The first was service paid to things which lie
 Guarded within the bosom of Thy will.
 Therefore to serve was high beatitude;
 Tumult was therefore gladness, and the fear
 Ennobling, venerable; sleep secure,
 And waking thoughts more rich than happiest dreams.

But as the ancient Prophets, borne aloft
 In vision, yet constrained by natural laws
 With them to take a troubled human heart,
 Wanted not consolations, nor a creed 440
 Of reconciliation, then when they denounced,
 On towns and cities, wallowing in the abyss
 Of their offences, punishment to come;
 Or saw, like other men, with bodily eyes,
 Before them, in some desolated place,
 The wrath consummate and the threat fulfilled;
 So, with devout humility be it said,
 So, did a portion of that spirit fall
 On me uplifted from the vantage-ground
 Of pity and sorrow to a state of being 450
 That through the time's exceeding fierceness saw
 Glimpses of retribution, terrible,
 And in the order of sublime behests:
 But, even if that were not, amid the awe
 Of unintelligible chastisement,
 Not only acquiescences of faith
 Survived, but daring sympathies with power,
 Motions not treacherous or profane, else why
 Within the folds of no ungentle breast
 Their dread vibration to this hour prolonged? 460
 Wild blasts of music thus could find their way
 Into the midst of turbulent events;
 So that worst tempests might be listened to.

Then was the truth received into my heart,
 That, under heaviest sorrow earth can bring,
 If from the affliction somewhere do not grow
 Honour which could not else have been, a faith,
 An elevation, and a sanctity,
 If new strength be not given nor old restored,
 The blame is ours, not Nature's. When a taunt 470
 Was taken up by scoffers in their pride,
 Saying, 'Behold the harvest that we reap
 From popular government and equality,'
 I clearly saw that neither these nor aught
 Of wild belief engrafted on their names
 By false philosophy had caused the woe,
 But a terrific reservoir of guilt
 And ignorance filled up from age to age,
 That could no longer hold its loathsome charge,
 But burst and spread in deluge through the land. 480

And as the desert hath green spots, the sea
 Small islands scattered amid stormy waves,
 So *that* disastrous period did not want
 Bright sprinklings of all human excellence,
 To which the silver wands of saints in Heaven
 Might point with rapturous joy. Yet not the less,
 For those examples, in no age surpassed,
 Of fortitude and energy and love,
 And human nature faithful to herself
 Under worst trials, was I driven to think 490
 Of the glad times when first I traversed France
 A youthful pilgrim; above all reviewed
 That eventide, when under windows bright
 With happy faces and with garlands hung,
 And through a rainbow-arch that spanned the
 street,
 Triumphal pomp for liberty confirmed,
 I paced, a dear companion at my side,
 The town of Arras, whence with promise high
 Issued, on delegation to sustain
 Humanity and right, *that* Robespierre, 500
 He who thereafter, and in how short time!
 Wielded the sceptre of the Atheist crew.
 When the calamity spread far and wide—
 And this same city, that did then appear
 To outrun the rest in exultation, groaned
 Under the vengeance of her cruel son,
 As Lear reproached the winds—I could almost
 Have quarrelled with that blameless spectacle

For lingering yet an image in my mind
To mock me under such a strange reverse.

510

O Friend ! few happier moments have been mine
Than that which told the downfall of this Tribe
So dreaded, so abhorred. The day deserves
A separate record. Over the smooth sands
Of Leven's ample estuary lay
My journey, and beneath a genial sun,
With distant prospect among gleams of sky
And clouds and intermingling mountain-tops,
In one inseparable glory clad,
Creatures of one ethereal substance met 520
In consistory, like a diadem
Or crown of burning seraphs as they sit
In the empyrean. Underneath that pomp
Celestial, lay unseen the pastoral vales
Among whose happy fields I had grown up
From childhood. On the fulgent spectacle,
That neither passed away nor changed, I gazed
Enrapt ; but brightest things are wont to draw
Sad opposites out of the inner heart,
As even their pensive influence drew from mine. 530
How could it otherwise ? for not in vain
That very morning had I turned aside
To seek the ground where, 'mid a throng of graves,
An honoured teacher of my youth was laid,
And on the stone were graven by his desire
Lines from the churchyard elegy of Gray.
This faithful guide, speaking from his death-bed,
Added no farewell to his parting counsel,
But said to me, ' My head will soon lie low ' ;
And when I saw the turf that covered him, 540
After the lapse of full eight years, those words,
With sound of voice and countenance of the Man,
Came back upon me, so that some few tears
Fell from me in my own despite. But now
I thought, still traversing that widespread plain,
With tender pleasure of the verses graven
Upon his tombstone, whispering to myself:
He loved the Poets, and, if now alive,
Would have loved me, as one not destitute
Of promise, nor belying the kind hope 550
That he had formed, when I, at his command,
Began to spin, with toil, my earliest songs.

As I advanced, all that I saw or felt

Was gentleness and peace. Upon a small
 And rocky island near, a fragment stood
 (Itself like a sea rock) the low remains
 (With shells encrusted, dark with briny weeds)
 Of a dilapidated structure, once
 A Romish chapel, where the vested priest
 Said matins at the hour that suited those 560
 Who crossed the sands with ebb of morning tide.
 Not far from that still ruin all the plain
 Lay spotted with a variegated crowd
 Of vehicles and travellers, horse and foot,
 Wading beneath the conduct of their guide
 In loose procession through the shallow stream
 Of inland waters; the great sea meanwhile
 Heaved at safe distance, far retired. I paused,
 Longing for skill to paint a scene so bright
 And cheerful, but the foremost of the band 570
 As he approached, no salutation given
 In the familiar language of the day,
 Cried, 'Robespierre is dead!'—nor was a doubt,
 After strict question, left within my mind
 That he and his supporters all were fallen.

Great was my transport, deep my gratitude
 To everlasting Justice, by this fiat
 Made manifest. 'Come now, ye golden times,'
 Said I forth-pouring on those open sands
 A hymn of triumph: 'as the morning comes 580
 From out the bosom of the night, come ye:
 Thus far our trust is verified; behold!
 They who with clumsy desperation brought
 A river of Blood, and preached that nothing else
 Could cleanse the Augean stable, by the might
 Of their own helper have been swept away;
 Their madness stands declared and visible;
 Elsewhere will safety now be sought, and earth
 March firmly towards righteousness and peace.'—
 Then schemes I framed more calmly, when and how
 The madding factions might be tranquillised, 591
 And how through hardships manifold and long
 The glorious renovation would proceed.
 Thus interrupted by uneasy bursts
 Of exultation, I pursued my way
 Along that very shore which I had skimmed
 In former days, when—spurring from the Vale
 Of Nightshade, and St. Mary's mouldering fane,
 And the stone abbot, after circuit made

In wantonness of heart, a joyous band
 Of schoolboys hastening to their distant home
 Along the margin of the moonlight sea—
 We beat with thundering hoofs the level sand.

600

BOOK ELEVENTH

FRANCE—(*concluded*)

FROM that time forth, Authority in France
 Put on a milder face ; Terror had ceased,
 Yet everything was wanting that might give
 Courage to them who looked for good by light
 Of rational Experience, for the shoots
 And hopeful blossoms of a second spring :
 Yet, in me, confidence was unimpaired ;
 The Senate's language, and the public acts
 And measures of the Government, though both
 Weak, and of heartless omen, had not power 10
 To daunt me ; in the People was my trust :
 And, in the virtues which mine eyes had seen,
 I knew that wound external could not take
 Life from the young Republic ; that new foes
 Would only follow, in the path of shame,
 Their brethren, and her triumphs be in the end
 Great, universal, irresistible.
 This intuition led me to confound
 One victory with another, higher far,—
 Triumphs of unambitious peace at home, 20
 And noiseless fortitude. Beholding still
 Resistance strong as heretofore, I thought
 That what was in degree the same was likewise
 The same in quality,—that, as the worse
 Of the two spirits then at strife remained
 Untired, the better, surely, would preserve
 The heart that first had roused him. Youth maintains,
 In all conditions of society,
 Communion more direct and intimate
 With Nature,—hence, oftentimes, with reason too— 30
 Than age or manhood, even. To Nature, then,
 Power had reverted : habit, custom, law,
 Had left an interregnum's open space
 For *her* to move about in, uncontrolled.

Hence could I see how Babel-like their task,
 Who, by the recent deluge stupefied,
 With their whole souls went culling from the day
 Its petty promises, to build a tower
 For their own safety ; laughed with my compeers
 At gravest heads, by enmity to France
 Distempered, till they found, in every blast
 Forced from the street-disturbing newsman's horn,
 For her great cause record or prophecy
 Of utter ruin. How might we believe
 That wisdom could, in any shape, come near
 Men clinging to delusions so insane ?
 And thus, experience proving that no few
 Of our opinions had been just, we took
 Like credit to ourselves where less was due,
 And thought that other notions were as sound,
 Yea, could not but be right, because we saw
 That foolish men opposed them.

40

50

To a strain
 More animated I might here give way,
 And tell, since juvenile errors are my theme,
 What in those days through Britain was performed
 To turn *all* judgments out of their right course ;
 But this is passion over-near ourselves,
 Reality too close and too intense,
 And intermixed with something, in my mind,
 Of scorn and condemnation personal,
 That would profane the sanctity of verse.
 Our Shepherds, this say merely, at that time
 Acted, or seemed at least to act, like men
 Thirsting to make the guardian crook of law
 A tool of murder ; they who ruled the State,—
 Though with such awful proof before their eyes
 That he, who would sow death, reaps death, or worse,
 And can reap nothing better,—child-like longed
 To imitate, not wise enough to avoid ;
 Or left (by mere timidity betrayed)
 The plain straight road, for one no better chosen
 Than if their wish had been to undermine
 Justice, and make an end of Liberty.

60

70

But from these bitter truths I must return
 To my own history. It hath been told
 That I was led to take an eager part
 In arguments of civil polity,
 Abruptly, and indeed before my time :
 I had approached, like other youths, the shield

Of human nature from the golden side, 80
 And would have fought, even to the death, to attest
 The quality of the metal which I saw.
 What there is best in individual man,
 Of wise in passion, and sublime in power,
 Benevolent in small societies,
 And great in large ones, I had oft revolved,
 Felt deeply, but not thoroughly understood
 By reason: nay, far from it; they were yet,
 As cause was given me afterwards to learn,
 Not proof against the injuries of the day; 90
 Lodged only at the sanctuary's door,
 Not safe within its bosom. Thus prepared,
 And with such general insight into evil,
 And of the bounds which sever it from good,
 As books and common intercourse with life
 Must needs have given—to the inexperienced mind,
 When the world travels in a beaten road,
 Guide faithful as is needed—I began
 To meditate with ardour on the rule
 And management of nations; what it is 100
 And ought to be; and strove to learn how far
 Their power or weakness, wealth or poverty,
 Their happiness or misery, depends
 Upon their laws, and fashion of the State.

O pleasant exercise of hope and joy!
 For mighty were the auxiliars which then stood
 Upon our side, us who were strong in love!
 Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
 But to be young was very Heaven! O times,
 In which the meagre, stale, forbidding ways 110
 Of custom, law, and statute, took at once
 The attraction of a country in romance!
 When Reason seemed the most to assert her rights
 When most intent on making of herself
 A prime enchantress—to assist the work,
 Which then was going forward in her name!
 Not favoured spots alone, but the whole Earth,
 The beauty wore of promise—that which sets
 (As at some moments might not be unfelt
 Among the bowers of Paradise itself) 120
 The budding rose above the rose full blown.
 What temper at the prospect did not wake
 To happiness unthought of? The inert
 Were roused, and lively natures rapt away!
 They who had fed their childhood upon dreams,

The play-fellows of fancy, who had made
 All powers of swiftness, subtilty, and strength
 Their ministers,—who in lordly wise had stirred
 Among the grandest objects of the sense,
 And dealt with whatsoever they found there 130
 As if they had within some lurking right
 To wield it ;—they, too, who of gentle mood
 Had watched all gentle motions, and to these
 Had fitted their own thoughts, schemers more mild,
 And in the region of their peaceful selves ;—
 Now was it that *both* found, the meek and lofty
 Did both find, helpers to their hearts' desire,
 And stuff at hand, plastic as they could wish,—
 Were called upon to exercise their skill,
 Not in Utopia,—subterranean fields,— 140
 Or some secreted island, Heaven knows where !
 But in the very world, which is the world
 Of all of us,—the place where, in the end,
 We find our happiness, or not at all !

Why should I not confess that Earth was then
 To me, what an inheritance, new-fallen,
 Seems, when the first time visited, to one
 Who thither comes to find in it his home ?
 He walks about and looks upon the spot
 With cordial transport, moulds it and remoulds, 150
 And is half pleased with things that are amiss,
 'Twill be such joy to see them disappear.

An active partisan, I thus convoked
 From every object pleasant circumstance
 To suit my ends ; I moved among mankind
 With genial feelings still predominant ;
 When erring, erring on the better part,
 And in the kinder spirit ; placable,
 Indulgent, as not uninformed that men
 See as they have been taught—Antiquity 160
 Gives rights to error ; and aware, no less,
 That throwing off oppression must be work
 As well of License as of Liberty ;
 And above all—for this was more than all—
 Not caring if the wind did now and then
 Blow keen upon an eminence that gave
 Prospect so large into futurity ;
 In brief, a child of Nature, as at first,
 Diffusing only those affections wider

That from the cradle had grown up with me,
 And losing, in no other way than light
 Is lost in light, the weak in the more strong. 170

In the main outline, such it might be said
 Was my condition, till with open war
 Britain opposed the liberties of France.
 This threw me first out of the pale of love ;
 Soured and corrupted, upwards to the source,
 My sentiments ; was not, as hitherto,
 A swallowing up of lesser things in great,
 But change of them into their contraries ; 180
 And thus a way was opened for mistakes
 And false conclusions, in degree as gross,
 In kind more dangerous. What had been a pride,
 Was now a shame ; my likings and my loves
 Ran in new channels, leaving old ones dry ;
 And hence a blow that, in maturer age,
 Would but have touched the judgment, struck more deep
 Into sensations near the heart : meantime,
 As from the first, wild theories were afloat,
 To whose pretensions, sedulously urged, 190
 I had but lent a careless ear, assured
 That time was ready to set all things right,
 And that the multitude, so long oppressed,
 Would be oppressed no more.

But when events
 Brought less encouragement, and unto these
 The immediate proof of principles no more
 Could be entrusted, while the events themselves,
 Worn out in greatness, stripped of novelty,
 Less occupied the mind, and sentiments
 Could through my understanding's natural growth 200
 No longer keep their ground, by faith maintained
 Of inward consciousness, and hope that laid
 Her hand upon her object—evidence
 Safer, of universal application, such
 As could not be impeached, was sought elsewhere.

But now, become oppressors in their turn,
 Frenchmen had changed a war of self-defence
 For one of conquest, losing sight of all
 Which they had struggled for : up mounted now,
 Openly in the eye of earth and heaven, 210
 The scale of liberty. I read her doom,
 With anger vexed, with disappointment sore,
 But not dismayed, nor taking to the shame

Of a false prophet. While resentment rose
 Striving to hide, what nought could heal, the wounds
 Of mortified presumption, I adhered
 More firmly to old tenets, and, to prove
 Their temper, strained them more; and thus, in heat
 Of contest, did opinions every day
 Grow into consequence, till round my mind 220
 They clung, as if they were its life, nay more,
 The very being of the immortal soul.

This was the time, when, all things tending fast
 To depravation, speculative schemes—
 That promised to abstract the hopes of Man
 Out of his feelings, to be fixed thenceforth
 For ever in a purer element—
 Found ready welcome. Tempting region *that*
 For Zeal to enter and refresh herself, 230
 Where passions had the privilege to work,
 And never hear the sound of their own names.
 But, speaking more in charity, the dream
 Flattered the young, pleased with extremes, nor least
 With that which makes our Reason's naked self
 The object of its fervour. What delight!
 How glorious! in self-knowledge and self-rule,
 To look through all the frailties of the world,
 And, with a resolute mastery shaking off
 Infirmities of nature, time, and place,
 Build social upon personal Liberty, 240
 Which, to the blind restraints of general laws
 Superior, magisterially adopts
 One guide, the light of circumstances, flashed
 Upon an independent intellect.
 Thus expectation rose again; thus hope,
 From her first ground expelled, grew proud once
 more.

Oft, as my thoughts were turned to human kind,
 I scorned indifference; but, inflamed with thirst
 Of a secure intelligence, and sick
 Of other longing, I pursued what seemed 250
 A more exalted nature; wished that Man
 Should start out of his earthy, worm-like state,
 And spread abroad the wings of Liberty,
 Lord of himself, in undisturbed delight—
 A noble aspiration! *yet* I feel
 (Sustained by worthier as by wiser thoughts)
 The aspiration, nor shall ever cease
 To feel it;—but return we to our course.

Enough, 'tis true—could such a plea excuse
 Those aberrations—had the clamorous friends 260
 Of ancient Institutions said and done
 To bring disgrace upon their very names ;
 Disgrace of which, custom and written law
 And sundry moral sentiments, as props
 Or emanations of those institutes,

Too justly bore a part. A veil had been
 Uplifted ; why deceive ourselves ? in sooth,
 'Twas even so ; and sorrow for the man
 Who either had not eyes wherewith to see,
 Or, seeing, had forgotten ! A strong shock 270
 Was given to old opinions ; all men's minds
 Had felt its power, and mine was both let loose,
 Let loose and goaded. After what hath been
 Already said of patriotic love,

Suffice it here to add, that, somewhat stern
 In temperament, withal a happy man,
 And therefore bold to look on painful things,
 Free likewise of the world, and thence more bold,
 I summoned my best skill, and toiled, intent
 To anatomise the frame of social life ; 280
 Yea, the whole body of society
 Searched to its heart. Share with me, Friend ! the
 wish

That some dramatic tale, endued with shapes
 Livelier, and flinging out less guarded words
 Than suit the work we fashion, might set forth
 What then I learned, or think I learned, of truth,
 And the errors into which I fell, betrayed
 By present objects, and by reasonings false
 From their beginnings, inasmuch as drawn
 Out of a heart that had been turned aside 290
 From Nature's way by outward accidents,
 And which was thus confounded, more and more
 Misguided, and misguiding. So I fared,
 Dragging all precepts, judgments, maxims, creeds,
 Like culprits to the bar ; calling the mind,
 Suspiciously, to establish in plain day
 Her titles and her honours ; now believing,
 Now disbelieving ; endlessly perplexed
 With impulse, motive, right and wrong, the
 ground

Of obligation, what the rule and whence 300
 The sanction ; till, demanding formal *proof*,
 And seeking it in everything, I lost
 All feeling of conviction, and, in fine,

Sick, wearied out with contrarieties,
Yielded up moral questions in despair.

This was the crisis of that strong disease,
This the soul's last and lowest ebb; I drooped,
Deeming our blessed reason of least use
Where wanted most: 'The lordly attributes
Of will and choice,' I bitterly exclaimed, 310
'What are they but a mockery of a Being
Who hath in no concerns of his a test
Of good and evil; knows not what to fear
Or hope for, what to covet or to shun;
And who, if those could be discerned, would yet
Be little profited, would see, and ask
Where is the obligation to enforce?
And, to acknowledged law rebellious, still,
As selfish passion urged, would act amiss;
The dupe of folly, or the slave of crime.' 320

Depressed, bewildered thus, I did not walk
With scoffers, seeking light and gay revenge
From indiscriminate laughter, nor sate down
In reconciliation with an utter waste
Of intellect; such sloth I could not brook,
(Too well I loved, in that my spring of life,
Pains-taking thoughts, and truth, their dear reward,)
But turned to abstract science, and there sought
Work for the reasoning faculty enthroned
Where the disturbances of space and time— 330
Whether in matters various, properties
Inherent, or from human will and power
Derived—find no admission. Then it was—
Thanks to the bounteous Giver of all good!—
That the beloved Sister in whose sight
Those days were passed, now speaking in a voice
Of sudden admonition—like a brook
That did but *cross* a lonely road, and now
Is seen, heard, felt, and caught at every turn,
Companion never lost through many a league— 340
Maintained for me a saving intercourse
With my true self; for, though bedimmed and changed
Much, as it seemed, I was no further changed
Than as a clouded and a waning moon:
She whispered still that brightness would return;
She, in the midst of all, preserved me still
A Poet, made me seek beneath that name,
And that alone, my office upon earth;

And, lastly, as hereafter will be shown,
 If willing audience fail not, Nature's self, 350
 By all varieties of human love
 Assisted, led me back through opening day
 To those sweet counsels between head and heart
 Whence grew that genuine knowledge, fraught with
 peace,
 Which, through the later sinkings of this cause,
 Hath still upheld me, and upholds me now
 In the catastrophe (for so they dream,
 And nothing less), when, finally to close
 And seal up all the gains of France, a Pope
 Is summoned in, to crown an Emperor— 360
 This last opprobrium, when we see a people,
 That once looked up in faith, as if to Heaven
 For manna, take a lesson from the dog
 Returning to his vomit; when the sun
 That rose in splendour, was alive, and moved
 In exultation with a living pomp
 Of clouds—his glory's natural retinue—
 Hath dropped all functions by the gods bestowed,
 And, turned into a gew-gaw, a machine,
 Sets like an Opera phantom.

Thus, O Friend! 370
 Through times of honour and through times of shame
 Descending, have I faithfully retraced
 The perturbations of a youthful mind
 Under a long-lived storm of great events—
 A story destined for thy ear, who now,
 Among the fallen of nations, dost abide
 Where Etna, over hill and valley, casts
 His shadow stretching towards Syracuse,
 The city of Timoleon! Righteous Heaven!
 How are the mighty prostrated! They first, 380
 They first of all that breathe should have awaked
 When the great voice was heard from out the tombs
 Of ancient heroes. If I suffered grief
 For ill-requited France, by many deemed
 A trifle only in her proudest day;
 Have been distressed to think of what she once
 Promised, now is; a far more sober cause
 Thine eyes must see of sorrow in a land,
 To the reanimating influence lost
 Of memory, to virtue lost and hope, 390
 Though with the wreck of loftier years bestrewn.

But indignation works where hope is not,

And thou, O Friend ! wilt be refreshed. There is
 One great society alone on earth :
 The noble Living and the noble Dead.

Thine be such converse strong and sanative,
 A ladder for thy spirit to reascend
 To health and joy and pure contentedness ;
 To me the grief confined, that thou art gone
 From this last spot of earth, where Freedom now 400
 Stands single in her only sanctuary ;
 A lonely wanderer art gone, by pain
 Compelled and sickness, at this latter day,
 This sorrowful reverse for all mankind.
 I feel for thee, must utter what I feel :
 The sympathies erewhile in part discharged,
 Gather afresh, and will have vent again :
 My own delights do scarcely seem to me
 My own delights ; the lordly Alps themselves,
 Those rosy peaks, from which the Morning looks 410
 Abroad on many nations, are no more
 For me that image of pure gladness
 Which they were wont to be. Through kindred scenes,
 For purpose, at a time, how different !
 Thou tak'st thy way, carrying the heart and soul
 That Nature gives to Poets, now by thought
 Matured, and in the summer of their strength.
 Oh ! wrap him in your shades, ye giant woods,
 On Etna's side ; and thou, O flowery field
 Of Enna ! is there not some nook of thine, 420
 From the first playtime of the infant world
 Kept sacred to restorative delight,
 When from afar invoked by anxious love ?

Child of the mountains, among shepherds reared,
 Ere yet familiar with the classic page,
 I learnt to dream of Sicily ; and lo,
 The gloom, that, but a moment past, was deepened
 At thy command, at her command gives way ;
 A pleasant promise, wafted from her shores,
 Comes o'er my heart : in fancy I behold 430
 Her seas yet smiling, her once happy vales ;
 Nor can my tongue give utterance to a name
 Of note belonging to that honoured isle,
 Philosopher or Bard, Empedocles,
 Or Archimedes, pure abstracted soul !
 That doth not yield a solace to my grief :
 And, O Theocritus, so far have some

Prevailed among the powers of heaven and earth,
 By their endowments, good or great, that they
 Have had, as thou reportest, miracles 440
 Wrought for them in old time : yea, not unmoved,
 When thinking on my own beloved friend,
 I hear thee tell how bees with honey fed
 Divine Comates, by his impious lord
 Within a chest imprisoned ; how they came
 Laden from blooming grove or flowery field,
 And fed him there, alive, month after month,
 Because the goatherd, blessed man ! had lips
 Wet with the Muses' nectar.

Thus I soothe
 The pensive moments by this calm fireside, 450
 And find a thousand bounteous images
 To cheer the thoughts of those I love, and mine.
 Our prayers have been accepted ; thou wilt stand
 On Etna's summit, above earth and sea,
 Triumphant, winning from the invaded heavens
 Thoughts without bound, magnificent designs,
 Worthy of poets who attuned their harps
 In wood or echoing cave, for discipline
 Of heroes ; or, in reverence to the gods,
 'Mid temples, served by sapient priests, and choirs 460
 Of virgins crowned with roses. Not in vain
 Those temples, where they in their ruins yet
 Survive for inspiration, shall attract
 Thy solitary steps : and on the brink
 Thou wilt recline of pastoral Arethuse ;
 Or, if that fountain be in truth no more,
 Then, near some other spring—which by the name
 Thou gratelest, willingly deceived—
 I see thee linger a glad votary,
 And not a captive pining for his home. 470

BOOK TWELFTH

IMAGINATION AND TASTE, HOW IMPAIRED AND RESTORED

LONG time have human ignorance and guilt
 Detained us, on what spectacles of woe
 Compelled to look, and inwardly oppressed
 With sorrow, disappointment, vexing thoughts,

Confusion of the judgment, zeal decayed,
 And, lastly, utter loss of hope itself
 And things to hope for! Not with these began
 Our song, and not with these our song must end.—
 Ye motions of delight, that haunt the sides
 Of the green hills; ye breezes and soft airs, 10
 Whose subtle intercourse with breathing flowers,
 Feelingly watched, might teach Man's haughty race
 How without injury to take, to give
 Without offence; ye who, as if to show
 The wondrous influence of power gently used,
 Bend the complying heads of lordly pines,
 And, with a touch, shift the stupendous clouds
 Through the whole compass of the sky; ye brooks,
 Muttering along the stones, a busy noise
 By day, a quiet sound in silent night; 20
 Ye waves, that out of the great deep steal forth
 In a calm hour to kiss the pebbly shore,
 Not mute, and then retire, fearing no storm;
 And you, ye groves, whose ministry it is
 To interpose the covert of your shades,
 Even as a sleep, between the heart of man
 And outward troubles, between man himself,
 Not seldom, and his own uneasy heart:
 Oh! that I had a music and a voice
 Harmonious as your own, that I might tell 30
 What ye have done for me. The morning shines,
 Nor heedeth Man's perverseness; Spring returns,—
 I saw the Spring return, and could rejoice,
 In common with the children of her love,
 Piping on boughs, or sporting on fresh fields,
 Or boldly seeking pleasure nearer heaven
 On wings that navigate cerulean skies.
 So neither were complacency, nor peace,
 Nor tender yearnings, wanting for my good
 Through these distracted times; in Nature still 40
 Glorifying, I found a counterpoise in her,
 Which, when the spirit of evil reached its height,
 Maintained for me a secret happiness.

This narrative, my Friend! hath chiefly told
 Of intellectual power, fostering love,
 Dispensing truth, and, over men and things,
 Where reason yet might hesitate, diffusing
 Prophetic sympathies of genial faith:
 So was I favoured—such my happy lot—
 Until that natural graciousness of mind

Gave way to overpressure from the times
 And their disastrous issues. What availed,
 When spells forbade the voyager to land,
 That fragrant notice of a pleasant shore
 Wafted, at intervals, from many a bower
 Of blissful gratitude and fearless love?
 Dare I avow that wish was mine to see,
 And hope that future times *would* surely see,
 The man to come, parted, as by a gulph,
 From him who had been; that I could no more 60
 Trust the elevation which had made me one
 With the great family that still survives
 To illuminate the abyss of ages past,
 Sage, warrior, patriot, hero; for it seemed
 That their best virtues were not free from taint
 Of something false and weak, that could not stand
 The open eye of Reason. Then I said,
 'Go to the Poets, they will speak to thee
 More perfectly of purer creatures;—yet
 If reason be nobility in man, 70
 Can aught be more ignoble than the man
 Whom they delight in, blinded as he is
 By prejudice, the miserable slave
 Of low ambition or distempered love?'

In such strange passion, if I may once more
 Review the past, I warred against myself—
 A bigot to a new idolatry—
 Like a cowed monk who hath forsworn the world,
 Zealously laboured to cut off my heart
 From all the sources of her former strength; 80
 And as, by simple waving of a wand,
 The wizard instantaneously dissolves
 Palace or grove, even so could I unsoul
 As readily by syllogistic words
 Those mysteries of being which have made,
 And shall continue evermore to make,
 Of the whole human race one brotherhood.

What wonder, then, if, to a mind so far
 Perverted, even the visible Universe
 Fell under the dominion of a taste 90
 Less spiritual, with microscopic view
 Was scanned, as I had scanned the moral world?

O Soul of Nature! excellent and fair!
 That didst rejoice with me, with whom I, too,

Rejoiced through early youth, before the winds
 And roaring waters, and in lights and shades
 That marched and countermarched about the hills
 In glorious apparition, Powers on whom
 I daily waited, now all eye and now
 All ear; but never long without the heart 100
 Employed, and man's unfolding intellect:
 O Soul of Nature! that, by laws divine
 Sustained and governed, still dost overflow
 With an impassioned life, what feeble ones
 Walk on this earth! how feeble have I been
 When thou wert in thy strength! Nor this through
 stroke
 Of human suffering, such as justifies
 Remissness and inaptitude of mind,
 But through presumption; even in pleasure pleased
 Unworthily, disliking here, and there 110
 Liking; by rules of mimic art transferred
 To things above all art; but more,—for this,
 Although a strong infection of the age,
 Was never much my habit—giving way
 To a comparison of scene with scene,
 Bent overmuch on superficial things,
 Pampering myself with meagre novelties
 Of colour and proportion; to the moods
 Of time and season, to the moral power,
 The affections and the spirit of the place, 120
 Insensible. Nor only did the love
 Of sitting thus in judgment interrupt
 My deeper feelings, but another cause,
 More subtle and less easily explained,
 That almost seems inherent in the creature,
 A twofold frame of body and of mind.
 I speak in recollection of a time
 When the bodily eye, in every stage of life
 The most despotic of our senses, gained
 Such strength in *me* as often held my mind 130
 In absolute dominion. Gladly here,
 Entering upon abstruser argument,
 Could I endeavour to unfold the means
 Which Nature studiously employs to thwart
 This tyranny, summons all the senses each
 To counteract the other, and themselves,
 And makes them all, and the objects with which all
 Are conversant, subservient in their turn
 To the great ends of Liberty and Power.
 But leave we this: enough that my delights 140

(Such as they were) were sought insatiably.
 Vivid the transport, vivid though not profound ;
 I roamed from hill to hill, from rock to rock,
 Still craving combinations of new forms,
 New pleasure, wider empire for the sight,
 Proud of her own endowments, and rejoiced
 To lay the inner faculties asleep.
 Amid the turns and counterturns, the strife
 And various trials of our complex being,
 As we grow up, such thralldom of that sense 150
 Seems hard to shun. And yet I knew a maid,
 A young enthusiast, who escaped these bonds ;
 Her eye was not the mistress of her heart ;
 Far less did rules prescribed by passive taste,
 Or barren intermeddling subtleties,
 Perplex her mind ; but, wise as women are
 When genial circumstance hath favoured them,
 She welcomed what was given, and craved no more ;
 Whate'er the scene presented to her view
 That was the best, to that she was attuned 160
 By her benign simplicity of life,
 And through a perfect happiness of soul,
 Whose variegated feelings were in this
 Sisters, that they were each some new delight.
 Birds in the bower, and lambs in the green field,
 Could they have known her, would have loved ;
 methought
 Her very presence such a sweetness breathed,
 That flowers, and trees, and even the silent hills,
 And everything she looked on, should have had
 An intimation how she bore herself 170
 Towards them and to all creatures. God delights
 In such a being ; for, her common thoughts
 Are piety, her life is gratitude.

Even like this maid, before I was called forth
 From the retirement of my native hills,
 I loved whate'er I saw : nor lightly loved,
 But most intensely ; never dreamt of aught
 More grand, more fair, more exquisitely framed
 Than those few nooks to which my happy feet
 Were limited. I had not at that time 180
 Lived long enough, nor in the least survived
 The first diviner influence of this world,
 As it appears to unaccustomed eyes.
 Worshipping then among the depth of things,
 As piety ordained ; could I submit

To measured admiration, or to aught
 That should preclude humility and love ?
 I felt, observed, and pondered ; did not judge,
 Yea, never thought of judging ; with the gift
 Of all this glory filled and satisfied. 190
 And afterwards, when through the gorgeous Alps
 Roaming, I carried with me the same heart :
 In truth, the degradation—howsoe'er
 Induced, effect, in whatsoe'er degree,
 Of custom that prepares a partial scale
 In which the little oft outweighs the great ;
 Or any other cause that hath been named ;
 Or lastly, aggravated by the times
 And their impassioned sounds, which well might make
 The milder minstrelsies of rural scenes 200
 Inaudible—was transient ; I had known
 Too forcibly, too early in my life,
 Visitings of imaginative power
 For this to last : I shook the habit off
 Entirely and for ever, and again
 In Nature's presence stood, as now I stand,
 A sensitive being, a *creative* soul.

There are in our existence spots of time,
 That with distinct pre-eminence retain
 A renovating virtue, whence—depressed 210
 By false opinion and contentious thought,
 Or aught of heavier or more deadly weight,
 In trivial occupations, and the round
 Of ordinary intercourse—our minds
 Are nourished and invisibly repaired ;
 A virtue, by which pleasure is enhanced,
 That penetrates, enables us to mount,
 When high, more high, and lifts us up when fallen.
 This efficacious spirit chiefly lurks
 Among those passages of life that give 220
 Profoundest knowledge to what point, and how,
 The mind is lord and master—outward sense
 The obedient servant of her will. Such moments
 Are scattered everywhere, taking their date
 From our first childhood. I remember well,
 That once, while yet my inexperienced hand
 Could scarcely hold a bridle, with proud hopes
 I mounted, and we journeyed towards the hills :
 An ancient servant of my father's house
 Was with me, my encourager and guide : 230
 We had not travelled long, ere some mischance

Disjoined me from my comrade ; and, through fear
Dismounting, down the rough and stony moor
I led my horse, and, stumbling on, at length
Came to a bottom, where in former times
A murderer had been hung in iron chains.
The gibbet-mast had mouldered down, the bones
And iron case were gone ; but on the turf,
Hard by, soon after that fell deed was wrought,
Some unknown hand had carved the murderer's name.
The monumental letters were inscribed 241
In times long past ; but still, from year to year,
By superstition of the neighbourhood,
The grass is cleared away, and to this hour
The characters are fresh and visible :
A casual glance had shown them, and I fled,
Faltering and faint, and ignorant of the road :
Then, reascending the bare common, saw
A naked pool that lay beneath the hills,
The beacon on the summit, and, more near, 250
A girl, who bore a pitcher on her head,
And seemed with difficult steps to force her way
Against the blowing wind. It was, in truth,
An ordinary sight ; but I should need
Colours and words that are unknown to man,
To paint the visionary dreariness
Which, while I looked all round for my lost guide,
Invested moorland waste, and naked pool,
The beacon crowning the lone eminence,
The female and her garments vexed and tossed 260
By the strong wind. When, in the blessed hours
Of early love, the loved one at my side,
I roamed, in daily presence of this scene,
Upon the naked pool and dreary crags,
And on the melancholy beacon, fell
A spirit of pleasure and youth's golden gleam ;
And think ye not with radiance more sublime
For these remembrances, and for the power
They had left behind ? So feeling comes in aid
Of feeling, and diversity of strength 270
Attends us, if but once we have been strong.
Oh ! mystery of man, from what a depth
Proceed thy honours. I am lost, but see
In simple childhood something of the base
On which thy greatness stands ; but this I feel,
That from thyself it comes, that thou must give,
Else never canst receive. The days gone by
Return upon me almost from the dawn

Of life : the hiding-places of man's power
 Open ; I would approach them, but they close. 280
 I see by glimpses now ; when age comes on,
 May scarcely see at all ; and I would give,
 While yet we may, as far as words can give,
 Substance and life to what I feel, enshrining,
 Such is my hope, the spirit of the Past
 For future restoration.—Yet another
 Of these memorials :—

One Christmas-time,
 On the glad eve of its dear holidays,
 Feverish, and tired, and restless, I went forth
 Into the fields, impatient for the sight 290
 Of those led palfreys that should bear us home,
 My brothers and myself. There rose a crag,
 That, from the meeting-point of two highways
 Ascending, overlooked them both, far stretched ;
 Thither, uncertain on which road to fix
 My expectation, thither I repaired,
 Scout-like, and gained the summit ; 'twas a day
 Tempestuous, dark, and wild, and on the grass
 I sate half-sheltered by a naked wall ;
 Upon my right hand couched a single sheep, 300
 Upon my left a blasted hawthorn stood ;
 With those companions at my side, I watched,
 Straining my eyes intensely, as the mist
 Gave intermitting prospect of the copse
 And plain beneath. Ere we to school returned,—
 That dreary time,—ere we had been ten days
 Sojourners in my father's house, he died ;
 And I and my three brothers, orphans then,
 Followed his body to the grave. The event,
 With all the sorrow that it brought, appeared 310
 A chastisement ; and when I called to mind
 That day so lately past, when from the crag
 I looked in such anxiety of hope ;
 With trite reflections of morality,
 Yet in the deepest passion, I bowed low
 To God, Who thus corrected my desires ;
 And, afterwards, the wind and sleety rain,
 And all the business of the elements,
 The single sheep, and the one blasted tree,
 And the bleak music from that old stone wall, 320
 The noise of wood and water, and the mist
 That on the line of each of those two roads
 Advanced in such indisputable shapes ;
 All these were kindred spectacles and sounds

To which I oft repaired, and thence would drink,
 As at a fountain ; and on winter nights,
 Down to this very time, when storm and rain
 Beat on my roof, or, haply, at noon-day,
 While in a grove I walk, whose lofty trees,
 Laden with summer's thickest foliage, rock
 In a strong wind, some working of the spirit,
 Some inward agitations thence are brought,
 Whate'er their office, whether to beguile
 Thoughts over busy in the course they took,
 Or animate an hour of vacant ease.

330

BOOK THIRTEENTH

IMAGINATION AND TASTE, HOW IMPAIRED
AND RESTORED—(*concluded*)

FROM Nature doth emotion come, and moods
 Of calmness equally are Nature's gift :
 This is her glory ; these two attributes
 Are sister horns that constitute her strength.
 Hence Genius, born to thrive by interchange
 Of peace and excitation, finds in her
 His best and purest friend ; from her receives
 That energy by which he seeks the truth,
 From her that happy stillness of the mind
 Which fits him to receive it when unsought.

10

Such benefit the humblest intellects
 Partake of, each in their degree ; 'tis mine
 To speak, what I myself have known and felt ;
 Smooth task ! for words find easy way, inspired
 By gratitude, and confidence in truth.
 Long time in search of knowledge did I range
 The field of human life, in heart and mind
 Benighted ; but, the dawn beginning now
 To reappear, 'twas proved that not in vain
 I had been taught to reverence a Power
 That is the visible quality and shape
 And image of right reason ; that matures
 Her processes by steadfast laws ; gives birth
 To no impatient or fallacious hopes,
 No heat of passion or excessive zeal,
 No vain conceits ; provokes to no quick turns

20

Of self-applauding intellect ; but trains
 To meekness, and exalts by humble faith ;
 Holds up before the mind intoxicate
 With present objects, and the busy dance 30
 Of things that pass away, a temperate show
 Of objects that endure ; and by this course
 Disposes her, when over-fondly set
 On throwing off incumbrances, to seek
 In man, and in the frame of social life,
 Whate'er there is desirable and good
 Of kindred permanence, unchanged in form
 And function, or, through strict vicissitude
 Of life and death, revolving. Above all
 Were re-established now those watchful thoughts 40
 Which, seeing little worthy or sublime
 In what the Historian's pen so much delights
 To blazon—power and energy detached
 From moral purpose—early tutored me
 To look with feelings of fraternal love
 Upon the unassuming things that hold
 A silent station in this beauteous world.

Thus moderated, thus composed, I found
 Once more in Man an object of delight,
 Of pure imagination, and of love ; 50
 And, as the horizon of my mind enlarged,
 Again I took the intellectual eye
 For my instructor, studious more to see
 Great truths, than touch and handle little ones.
 Knowledge was given accordingly ; my trust
 Became more firm in feelings that had stood
 The test of such a trial ; clearer far
 My sense of excellence—of right and wrong :
 The promise of the present time retired
 Into its true proportion ; sanguine schemes, 60
 Ambitious projects, pleased me less ; I sought
 For present good in life's familiar face,
 And built thereon my hopes of good to come.

With settling judgments now of what would last
 And what would disappear ; prepared to find
 Presumption, folly, madness, in the men
 Who thrust themselves upon the passive world
 As Rulers of the world ; to see in these,
 Even when the public welfare is their aim,
 Plans without thought, or built on theories 70

Vague and unsound ; and having brought the books
 Of modern statists to their proper test,
 Life, human life, with all its sacred claims
 Of sex and age, and heaven-descended rights,
 Mortal, or those beyond the reach of death ;
 And having thus discerned how dire a thing
 Is worshipped in that idol proudly named
 'The Wealth of Nations,' *where* alone that wealth
 Is lodged, and how increased ; and having gained
 A more judicious knowledge of the worth
 And dignity of individual man,
 No composition of the brain, but man
 Of whom we read, the man whom we behold
 With our own eyes—I could not but inquire—
 Not with less interest than heretofore,
 But greater, though in spirit more subdued—
 Why is this glorious creature to be found
 One only in ten thousand ? What one is,
 Why may not millions be ? What bars are thrown
 By Nature in the way of such a hope ?
 Our animal appetites and daily wants,
 Are these obstructions insurmountable ?
 If not, then others vanish into air.
 'Inspect the basis of the social pile :
 Inquire,' said I, 'how much of mental power
 And genuine virtue they possess who live
 By bodily toil, labour exceeding far
 Their due proportion, under all the weight
 Of that injustice which upon ourselves
 Ourselves entail.' Such estimate to frame
 I chiefly looked (what need to look beyond ?)
 Among the natural abodes of men,
 Fields with their rural works ; recalled to mind
 My earliest notices ; with these compared
 The observations made in later youth,
 And to that day continued.—For, the time
 Had never been when throes of mighty Nations
 And the world's tumult unto me could yield,
 How far soe'er transported and possessed,
 Full measure of content ; but still I craved
 An intermingling of distinct regards
 And truths of individual sympathy
 Nearer ourselves. Such often might be gleaned
 From the great City, else it must have proved
 To me a heart-depressing wilderness ;
 But much was wanting : therefore did I turn
 To you, ye pathways, and ye lonely roads ;

Sought you enriched with everything I prized,
With human kindnesses and simple joys.

Oh ! next to one dear state of bliss, vouchsafed 120
Alas ! to few in this untoward world,
The bliss of walking daily in life's prime
Through field or forest with the maid we love,
While yet our hearts are young, while yet we breathe
Nothing but happiness, in some lone nook,
Deep vale, or anywhere, the home of both,
From which it would be misery to stir :
Oh ! next to such enjoyment of our youth,
In my esteem, next to such dear delight, 130
Was that of wandering on from day to day
Where I could meditate in peace, and cull
Knowledge that step by step might lead me on
To wisdom ; or, as lightsome as a bird
Wafted upon the wind from distant lands,
Sing notes of greeting to strange fields or groves,
Which lacked not voice to welcome me in turn :
And, when that pleasant toil had ceased to please,
Converse with men, where if we meet a face
We almost meet a friend, on naked heaths
With long long ways before, by cottage bench, 140
Or well-spring where the weary traveller rests.

Who doth not love to follow with his eye
The windings of a public way ? the sight,
Familiar object as it is, hath wrought
On my imagination since the morn
Of childhood, when a disappearing line,
One daily present to my eyes, that crossed
The naked summit of a far-off hill
Beyond the limits that my feet had trod,
Was like an invitation into space 150
Boundless, or guide into eternity.
Yes, something of the grandeur which invests
The mariner, who sails the roaring sea
Through storm and darkness, early in my mind
Surrounded, too, the wanderers of the earth ;
Grandeur as much, and loveliness far more.
Awed have I been by strolling Bedlamites ;
From many other uncouth vagrants (passed
In fear) have walked with quicker steps ; but why
Take note of this ? When I began to inquire, 160
To watch and question those I met, and speak
Without reserve to them, the lonely roads

Were open schools in which I daily read
With most delight the passions of mankind,
Whether by words, looks, sighs, or tears, revealed ;
There saw into the depth of human souls,
Souls that appear to have no depth at all
To careless eyes. And—now convinced at heart
How little those formalities, to which
With overweening trust alone we give 170
The name of Education, have to do
With real feeling and just sense ; how vain
A correspondence with the talking world
Proves to the most ; and called to make good search
If man's estate, by doom of Nature yoked
With toil, be therefore yoked with ignorance ;
If virtue be indeed so hard to rear,
And intellectual strength so rare a boon—
I prized such walks still more, for there I found 180
Hope to my hope, and to my pleasure peace
And steadiness, and healing and repose
To every angry passion. There I heard,
From mouths of men obscure and lowly, truths
Replete with honour ; sounds in unison
With loftiest promises of good and fair.

There are who think that strong affection, love—
Known by whatever name—is falsely deemed
A gift, to use a term which they would use,
Of vulgar nature ; that its growth requires 190
Retirement, leisure, language purified
By manners studied and elaborate ;
That whoso feels such passion in its strength
Must live within the very light and air
Of courteous usages refined by art.
True is it, where oppression worse than death
Salutes the being at his birth, where grace
Of culture hath been utterly unknown,
And poverty and labour in excess
From day to day preoccupy the ground
Of the affections, and to Nature's self 200
Oppose a deeper nature ; there, indeed,
Love cannot be ; nor does it thrive with ease
Among the close and overcrowded haunts
Of cities, where the human heart is sick,
And the eye feeds it not, and cannot feed.
—Yes, in those wanderings deeply did I feel
How we mislead each other ; above all,
How books mislead us, seeking their reward

From judgments of the wealthy Few, who see
 By artificial lights ; how they debase 210
 The Many for the pleasure of those Few ;
 Effeminately level down the truth
 To certain general notions, for the sake
 Of being understood at once, or else
 Through want of better knowledge in the heads
 That framed them ; flattering self-conceit with words,
 That, while they most ambitiously set forth
 Extrinsic differences, the outward marks
 Whereby society has parted man
 From man, neglect the universal heart. 220

Here, calling up to mind what then I saw,
 A youthful traveller, and see daily now
 In the familiar circuit of my home,
 Here might I pause, and bend in reverence
 To Nature, and the power of human minds,
 To men as they are men within themselves.
 How oft high service is performed within,
 When all the external man is rude in show,—
 Not like a temple rich with pomp and gold,
 But a mere mountain-chapel, that protects 230
 Its simple worshippers from sun and shower.
 Of these, said I, shall be my song ; of these,
 If future years mature me for the task,
 Will I record the praises, making verse
 Deal boldly with substantial things ; in truth
 And sanctity of passion, speak of these,
 That justice may be done, obeisance paid
 Where it is due : thus haply shall I teach,
 Inspire ; through unadulterated ears
 Pour rapture, tenderness, and hope,—my theme 240
 No other than the very heart of man,
 As found among the best of those who live—
 Not unexalted by religious faith,
 Nor uninformed by books, good books, though few—
 In Nature's presence : thence may I select
 Sorrow, that is not sorrow, but delight ;
 And miserable love, that is not pain
 To hear of, for the glory that redounds
 Therefrom to human kind, and what we are.
 Be mine to follow with no timid step 250
 Where knowledge leads me : it shall be my pride
 That I have dared to tread this holy ground,
 Speaking no dream, but things oracular ;
 Matter not lightly to be heard by those

Who to the letter of the outward promise
 Do read the invisible soul ; by men adroit
 In speech, and for communion with the world
 Accomplished ; minds whose faculties are then
 Most active when they are most eloquent,
 And elevated most when most admired. 260
 Men may be found of other mould than these,
 Who are their own upholders, to themselves
 Encouragement, and energy, and will,
 Expressing liveliest thoughts in lively words
 As native passion dictates. Others, too,
 There are among the walks of homely life
 Still higher, men for contemplation framed,
 Shy, and unpractised in the strife of phrase ;
 Meek men, whose very souls perhaps would sink
 Beneath them, summoned to such intercourse : 270
 Theirs is the language of the heavens, the power,
 The thought, the image, and the silent joy :
 Words are but under-agents in their souls ;
 When they are grasping with their greatest strength,
 They do not breathe among them : this I speak
 In gratitude to God, Who feeds our hearts
 For His own service ; knoweth, loveth us,
 When we are unregarded by the world.

Also, about this time did I receive
 Convictions still more strong than heretofore, 280
 Not only that the inner frame is good,
 And graciously composed, but that, no less,
 Nature for all conditions wants not power
 To consecrate, if we have eyes to see,
 The outside of her creatures, and to breathe
 Grandeur upon the very humblest face
 Of human life. I felt that the array
 Of act and circumstance, and visible form,
 Is mainly to the pleasure of the mind
 What passion makes them ; that meanwhile the forms
 Of Nature have a passion in themselves, 290
 That intermingles with those works of man
 To which she summons him ; although the works
 Be mean, have nothing lofty of their own ;
 And that the Genius of the Poet hence
 May boldly take his way among mankind
 Wherever Nature leads ; that he hath stood
 By Nature's side among the men of old,
 And so shall stand for ever. Dearest Friend !
 If thou partake the animating faith 300

That Poets, even as Prophets, each with each
 Connected in a mighty scheme of truth,
 Have each his own peculiar faculty,
 Heaven's gift, a sense that fits him to perceive
 Objects unseen before, thou wilt not blame
 The humblest of this band who dares to hope
 That unto him hath also been vouchsafed
 An insight that in some sort he possesses,
 A privilege whereby a work of his,
 Proceeding from a source of untaught things, 310
 Creative and enduring, may become
 A power like one of Nature's. To a hope
 Not less ambitious once among the wilds
 Of Sarum's Plain, my youthful spirit was raised ;
 There, as I ranged at will the pastoral downs
 Trackless and smooth, or paced the bare white roads
 Lengthening in solitude their dreary line,
 Time with his retinue of ages fled
 Backwards, nor checked his flight until I saw
 Our dim ancestral Past in vision clear ; 320
 Saw multitudes of men, and, here and there,
 A single Briton clothed in wolf-skin vest,
 With shield and stone-axe, stride across the wold ;
 The voice of spears was heard, the rattling spear
 Shaken by arms of mighty bone, in strength,
 Long mouldered, of barbaric majesty.
 I called on Darkness—but before the word
 Was uttered, midnight darkness seemed to take
 All objects from my sight ; and lo ! again
 The Desert visible by dismal flames ; 330
 It is the sacrificial altar, fed
 With living men—how deep the groans ! the voice
 Of those that crowd the giant wicker thrills
 The monumental hillocks, and the pomp
 Is for both worlds, the living and the dead.
 At other moments—(for through that wide waste
 Three summer days I roamed) where'er the Plain
 Was figured o'er with circles, lines, or mounds,
 That yet survive, a work, as some divine,
 Shaped by the Druids, so to represent 340
 Their knowledge of the heavens, and image forth
 The constellations—gently was I charmed
 Into a waking dream, a reverie
 That, with believing eyes, where'er I turned,
 Beheld long-bearded teachers, with white wands
 Uplifted, pointing to the starry sky,
 Alternately, and plain below, while breath

Of music swayed their motions, and the waste
Rejoiced with them and me in those sweet sounds.

This for the past, and things that may be viewed 350
Or fancied in the obscurity of years
From monumental hints: and thou, O Friend!
Pleased with some unpremeditated strains
That served those wanderings to beguile, hast said
That then and there my mind had exercised
Upon the vulgar forms of present things,
The actual world of our familiar days,
Yet higher power; had caught from them a tone,
An image, and a character, by books
Not hitherto reflected. Call we this 360
A partial judgment—and yet why? for *then*
We were as strangers; and I may not speak
Thus wrongfully of verse, however rude,
Which on thy young imagination, trained
In the great City, broke like light from far.
Moreover, each man's Mind is to herself
Witness and judge; and I remember well
That in life's every-day appearances
I seemed about this time to gain clear sight
Of a new world—a world, too, that was fit 370
To be transmitted, and to other eyes
Made visible; as ruled by those fixed laws
Whence spiritual dignity originates,
Which do both give it being and maintain
A balance, an ennobling interchange
Of action from without and from within;
The excellence, pure function, and best power
Both of the object seen, and eye that sees.

BOOK FOURTEENTH

CONCLUSION

IN one of those excursions (may they ne'er
Fade from remembrance!) through the Northern
tracts

Of Cambria ranging with a youthful friend,
I left Bethgelert's huts at couching-time,
And westward took my way, to see the sun
Rise, from the top of Snowdon. To the door

Of a rude cottage at the mountain's base
 We came, and roused the shepherd who attends
 The adventurous stranger's steps, a trusty guide ;
 Then, cheered by short refreshment, sallied forth.

10

It was a close, warm, breezeless summer night,
 Wan, dull, and glaring, with a dripping fog
 Low-hung and thick that covered all the sky ;
 But, undiscouraged, we began to climb
 The mountain-side. The mist soon girt us round,
 And, after ordinary travellers' talk
 With our conductor, pensively we sank
 Each into commerce with his private thoughts :
 Thus did we breast the ascent, and by myself
 Was nothing either seen or heard that checked
 Those musings or diverted, save that once
 The shepherd's lurcher, who, among the crags,
 Had to his joy unearthed a hedgehog, teased
 His coiled-up prey with barkings turbulent.
 This small adventure, for even such it seemed
 In that wild place and at the dead of night,
 Being over and forgotten, on we wound
 In silence as before. With forehead bent
 Earthward, as if in opposition set
 Against an enemy, I panted up
 With eager pace, and no less eager thoughts.
 Thus might we wear a midnight hour away,
 Ascending at loose distance each from each,
 And I, as chanced, the foremost of the band ;
 When at my feet the ground appeared to brighten,
 And with a step or two seemed brighter still ;
 Nor was time given to ask or learn the cause,
 For instantly a light upon the turf
 Fell like a flash, and lo ! as I looked up,
 The Moon hung naked in a firmament
 Of azure without cloud, and at my feet
 Rested a silent sea of hoary mist.
 A hundred hills their dusky backs upheaved
 All over this still ocean ; and beyond,
 Far, far beyond, the solid vapours stretched,
 In headlands, tongues, and promontory shapes,
 Into the main Atlantic, that appeared
 To dwindle, and give up his majesty,
 Usurped upon far as the sight could reach.
 Not so the ethereal vault ; encroachment none
 Was there, nor loss ; only the inferior stars
 Had disappeared, or shed a fainter light

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In the clear presence of the full-orbed Moon,
Who, from her sovereign elevation, gazed
Upon the billowy ocean, as it lay
All meek and silent, save that through a rift—
Not distant from the shore whereon we stood,
A fixed, abysmal, gloomy, breathing-place—
Mounted the roar of waters, torrents, streams
Innumerable, roaring with one voice ! 60
Heard over earth and sea, and, in that hour,
For so it seemed, felt by the starry heavens.

When into air had partially dissolved
That vision, given to spirits of the night
And three chance human wanderers, in calm thought
Reflected, it appeared to me the type
Of a majestic intellect, its acts
And its possessions, what it has and craves,
What in itself it is, and would become.
There I beheld the emblem of a mind 70
That feeds upon infinity, that broods
Over the dark abyss, intent to hear
Its voices issuing forth to silent light
In one continuous stream ; a mind sustained
By recognitions of transcendent power,
In sense conducting to ideal form,
In soul of more than mortal privilege.
One function, above all, of such a mind
Had Nature shadowed there, by putting forth,
'Mid circumstances awful and sublime, 80
That mutual domination which she loves
To exert upon the face of outward things,
So moulded, joined, abstracted, so endowed
With interchangeable supremacy,
That men, least sensitive, see, hear, perceive,
And cannot choose but feel. The power, which all
Acknowledge when thus moved, which Nature thus
To bodily sense exhibits, is the express
Resemblance of that glorious faculty
That higher minds bear with them as their own. 90
This is the very spirit in which they deal
With the whole compass of the universe :
They from their native selves can send abroad
Kindred mutations ; for themselves create
A like existence ; and, whene'er it dawns
Created for them, catch it, or are caught
By its inevitable mastery,
Like angels stopped upon the wing by sound

Of harmony from Heaven's remotest spheres.
 Them the enduring and the transient both 100
 Serve to exalt ; they build up greatest things
 From least suggestions ; ever on the watch,
 Willing to work and to be wrought upon,
 They need not extraordinary calls
 To rouse them ; in a world of life they live,
 By sensible impressions not enthralled,
 But by their quickening impulse made more prompt
 To hold fit converse with the spiritual world,
 And with the generations of mankind
 Spread over time, past, present, and to come, 110
 Age after age, till Time shall be no more.
 Such minds are truly from the Deity,
 For they are Powers ; and hence the highest bliss
 That flesh can know is theirs—the consciousness
 Of Whom they are, habitually infused
 Through every image and through every thought,
 And all affections by communion raised
 From earth to heaven, from human to divine ;
 Hence endless occupation for the Soul,
 Whether discursive or intuitive ; 120
 Hence cheerfulness for acts of daily life,
 Emotions which best foresight need not fear,
 Most worthy then of trust when most intense.
 Hence, amid ills that vex and wrongs that crush
 Our hearts—if here the words of Holy Writ
 May with fit reverence be applied—that peace
 Which passeth understanding, that repose
 In moral judgments which from this pure source
 Must come, or will by man be sought in vain.

Oh ! who is he that hath his whole life long 130
 Preserved, enlarged, this freedom in himself ?
 For this alone is genuine liberty :
 Where is the favoured being who hath held
 That course unchecked, unerring, and untired,
 In one perpetual progress smooth and bright ?—
 A humbler destiny have we retraced,
 And told of lapse and hesitating choice,
 And backward wanderings along thorny ways :
 Yet—compassed round by mountain solitudes,
 Within whose solemn temple I received 140
 My earliest visitations, careless then
 Of what was given me ; and which now I range,
 A meditative, oft a suffering, man—
 Do I declare—in accents which, from truth

Deriving cheerful confidence, shall blend
 Their modulation with these vocal streams—
 That, whatsoever falls my better mind,
 Revolving with the accidents of life,
 May have sustained, that, howsoe'er misled,
 Never did I, in quest of right and wrong, 150
 Tamper with conscience from a private aim ;
 Nor was in any public hope the due
 Of selfish passions ; nor did ever yield
 Wilfully to mean cares or low pursuits,
 But shrunk with apprehensive jealousy
 From every combination which might aid
 The tendency, too potent in itself,
 Of use and custom to bow down the soul
 Under a growing weight of vulgar sense,
 And substitute a universe of death 160
 For that which moves with light and life informed,
 Actual, divine, and true. To fear and love,
 To love as prime and chief, for there fear ends,
 Be this ascribed ; to early intercourse,
 In presence of sublime or beautiful forms,
 With the adverse principles of pain and joy—
 Evil as one is rashly named by men
 Who know not what they speak. By love subsists
 All lasting grandeur, by pervading love ;
 That gone, we are as dust.—Behold the fields 170
 In balmy spring-time full of rising flowers
 And joyous creatures ; see that pair, the lamb
 And the lamb's mother, and their tender ways
 Shall touch thee to the heart ; thou callest this love,
 And not inaptly so, for love it is,
 Far as it carries thee. In some green bower
 Rest, and be not alone, but have thou there
 The One who is thy choice of all the world :
 There linger, listening, gazing, with delight
 Impassioned, but delight how pitiable ! 180
 Unless this love by a still higher love
 Be hallowed, love that breathes not without awe ;
 Love that adores, but on the knees of prayer,
 By heaven inspired ; that frees from chains the soul,
 Lifted, in union with the purest, best,
 Of earth-born passions, on the wings of praise
 Bearing a tribute to the Almighty's Throne.

This spiritual Love acts not nor can exist
 Without Imagination, which, in truth,
 Is but another name for absolute power 190

And clearest insight, amplitude of mind,
 And Reason in her most exalted mood.
 This faculty hath been the feeding source
 Of our long labour: we have traced the stream
 From the blind cavern whence is faintly heard
 Its natal murmur; followed it to light
 And open day; accompanied its course
 Among the ways of Nature, for a time
 Lost sight of it bewildered and engulfed;
 Then given it greeting as it rose once more
 In strength, reflecting from its placid breast
 The works of man and face of human life;
 And lastly, from its progress have we drawn
 Faith in life endless, the sustaining thought
 Of human Being, Eternity, and God.

200

Imagination having been our theme,
 So also hath that intellectual Love,
 For they are each in each, and cannot stand
 Dividually.—Here must thou be, O Man!
 Power to thyself; no Helper hast thou here;
 Here keepest thou in singleness thy state:
 No other can divide with thee this work:
 No secondary hand can intervene
 To fashion this ability; 'tis thine,
 The prime and vital principle is thine
 In the recesses of thy nature, far
 From any reach of outward fellowship,
 Else is not thine at all. But joy to him,
 Oh, joy to him who here hath sown, hath laid
 Here, the foundation of his future years!
 For all that friendship, all that love can do,
 All that a darling countenance can look
 Or dear voice utter, to complete the man,
 Perfect him, made imperfect in himself,
 All shall be his: and he whose soul hath risen
 Up to the height of feeling intellect
 Shall want no humbler tenderness; his heart
 Be tender as a nursing mother's heart;
 Of female softness shall his life be full,
 Of humble cares and delicate desires,
 Mild interests and gentlest sympathies.

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Child of my parents! Sister of my soul!
 Thanks in sincerest verse have been elsewhere
 Poured out for all the early tenderness
 Which I from thee imbibed: and 'tis most true
 That later seasons owed to thee no less;

For, spite of thy sweet influence and the touch
 Of kindred hands that opened out the springs
 Of genial thought in childhood, and in spite
 Of all that unassisted I had marked 240
 In life or nature of those charms minute
 That win their way into the heart by stealth,
 Still (to the very going-out of youth)
 I too exclusively esteemed *that* love,
 And sought *that* beauty, which, as Milton sings,
 Hath terror in it. Thou didst soften down
 This over-sternness; but for thee, dear Friend!
 My soul, too reckless of mild grace, had stood
 In her original self too confident,
 Retained too long a countenance severe; 250
 A rock with torrents roaring, with the clouds
 Familiar, and a favourite of the stars:
 But thou didst plant its crevices with flowers,
 Hang it with shrubs that twinkle in the breeze,
 And teach the little birds to build their nests
 And warble in its chambers. At a time
 When Nature, destined to remain so long
 Foremost in my affections, had fallen back
 Into a second place, pleased to become
 A handmaid to a nobler than herself, 260
 When every day brought with it some new sense
 Of exquisite regard for common things,
 And all the earth was budding with these gifts
 Of more refined humanity, thy breath,
 Dear Sister! was a kind of gentler spring
 That went before my steps. Thereafter came
 One whom with thee friendship had early paired;
 She came, no more a phantom to adorn
 A moment, but an inmate of the heart,
 And yet a spirit, there for me enshrined 270
 To penetrate the lofty and the low;
 Even as one essence of pervading light
 Shines, in the brightest of ten thousand stars
 And the meek worm that feeds her lonely lamp
 Couched in the dewy grass.

With such a theme,
 Coleridge! with this my argument, of thee
 Shall I be silent? O capacious Soul!
 Placed on this earth to love and understand,
 And from thy presence shed the light of love,
 Shall I be mute, ere thou be spoken of? 280
 Thy kindred influence to my heart of hearts
 Did also find its way. Thus fear relaxed

Her overweening grasp ; thus thoughts and things
 In the self-haunting spirit learned to take
 More rational proportions ; mystery,
 The incumbent mystery of sense and soul,
 Of life and death, time and eternity,
 Admitted more habitually a mild
 Interposition—a serene delight
 In closelier gathering cares, such as become 290
 A human creature, howsoe'er endowed,
 Poet, or destined for a humbler name ;
 And so the deep enthusiastic joy,
 The rapture of the hallelujah sent
 From all that breathes and is, was chastened, stemmed
 And balanced by pathetic truth, by trust
 In hopeful reason, leaning on the stay
 Of Providence ; and in reverence for duty,
 Here, if need be, struggling with storms, and there
 Strewing in peace life's humblest ground with herbs, 300
 At every season green, sweet at all hours.

And now, O Friend ! this history is brought
 To its appointed close : the discipline
 And consummation of a Poet's mind,
 In everything that stood most prominent,
 Have faithfully been pictured ; we have reached
 The time (our guiding object from the first)
 When we may, not presumptuously, I hope,
 Suppose my powers so far confirmed, and such
 My knowledge, as to make me capable 310
 Of building up a Work that shall endure.
 Yet much hath been omitted, as need was ;
 Of books how much ! and even of the other wealth
 That is collected among woods and fields,
 Far more : for Nature's secondary grace
 Hath hitherto been barely touched upon,
 The charm more superficial that attends
 Her works, as they present to Fancy's choice
 Apt illustrations of the moral world,
 Caught at a glance, or traced with curious pains. 320

Finally, and above all, O Friend ! (I speak
 With due regret) how much is overlooked
 In human nature and her subtle ways,
 As studied first in our own hearts, and then
 In life among the passions of mankind,
 Varying their composition and their hue,
 Where'er we move, under the diverse shapes

That individual character presents
 To an attentive eye. For progress meet,
 Along this intricate and difficult path, 330
 Whate'er was wanting, something had I gained,
 As one of many schoolfellows compelled,
 In hardy independence, to stand up
 Amid conflicting interests, and the shock
 Of various tempers; to endure and note
 What was not understood, though known to be;
 Among the mysteries of love and hate,
 Honour and shame, looking to right and left,
 Unchecked by innocence too delicate,
 And moral notions too intolerant, 340
 Sympathies too contracted. Hence, when called
 To take a station among men, the step
 Was easier, the transition more secure,
 More profitable also; for the mind
 Learns from such timely exercise to keep
 In wholesome separation the two natures,
 The one that feels, the other that observes.

Yet one word more of personal concern;—
 Since I withdrew unwillingly from France,
 I led an undomestic wanderer's life, 350
 In London chiefly harboured, whence I roamed.
 Tarrying at will in many a pleasant spot
 Of rural England's cultivated vales
 Or Cambrian solitudes. A youth—(he bore
 The name of Calvert—it shall live, if words
 Of mine can give it life,) in firm belief
 That by endowments not from me withheld
 Good might be furthered—in his last decay
 By a bequest sufficient for my needs
 Enabled me to pause for choice, and walk 360
 At large and unrestrained, nor damped too soon
 By mortal cares. Himself no Poet, yet
 Far less a common follower of the world,
 He deemed that my pursuits and labours lay
 Apart from all that leads to wealth, or even
 A necessary maintenance insures,
 Without some hazard to the finer sense;
 He cleared a passage for me, and the stream
 Flowed in the bent of Nature.

Having now
 Told what best merits mention, further pains 370
 Our present purpose seems not to require,
 And I have other tasks. Recall to mind

The mood in which this labour was begun,
 O Friend! The termination of my course
 Is nearer now, much nearer; yet even then,
 In that distraction and intense desire,
 I said unto the life which I had lived,
 Where art thou? Hear I not a voice from thee
 Which 'tis reproach to hear? Anon I rose
 As if on wings, and saw beneath me stretched 380
 Vast prospect of the world which I had been
 And was; and hence this Song, which like a lark
 I have protracted, in the unwearied heavens
 Singing, and often with more plaintive voice
 To earth attempered and her deep-drawn sighs,
 Yet centring all in love, and in the end
 All gratulant, if rightly understood.

Whether to me shall be allotted life,
 And, with life, power to accomplish aught of worth,
 That will be deemed no insufficient plea 390
 For having given the story of myself,
 Is all uncertain: but, beloved Friend!
 When, looking back, thou seest, in clearer view
 Than any liveliest sight of yesterday,
 That summer, under whose indulgent skies,
 Upon smooth Quantock's airy ridge we roved
 Unchecked, or loitered 'mid her sylvan combs,
 Thou in bewitching words, with happy heart,
 Didst chaunt the vision of that Ancient Man,
 The bright-eyed Mariner, and rueful woes 400
 Didst utter of the Lady Christabel;
 And I, associate with such labour, steeped
 In soft forgetfulness the livelong hours,
 Murmuring of him who, joyous hap, was found,
 After the perils of his moonlight ride,
 Near the loud waterfall; or her who sate
 In misery near the miserable Thorn;—
 When thou dost to that summer turn thy thoughts,
 And hast before thee all which then we were,
 To thee, in memory of that happiness, 410
 It will be known, by thee at least, my Friend!
 Felt, that the history of a Poet's mind
 Is labour not unworthy of regard:
 To thee the work shall justify itself.

The last and later portions of this gift
 Have been prepared, not with the buoyant spirits
 That were our daily portion when we first

Together wantoned in wild Poesy,
 But, under pressure of a private grief,
 Keen and enduring, which the mind and heart, 430
 That in this meditative history
 Have been laid open, needs must make me feel
 More deeply, yet enable me to bear
 More firmly; and a comfort now hath risen
 From hope that thou art near, and wilt be soon
 Restored to us in renovated health;
 When, after the first mingling of our tears
 'Mong other consolations, we may draw
 Some pleasure from this offering of my love.

Oh! yet a few short years of useful life, 430
 And all will be complete, thy race be run,
 Thy monument of glory will be raised;
 Then, though (too weak to tread the ways of truth)
 This age fall back to old idolatry,
 Though men return to servitude as fast
 As the tide ebbs, to ignominy and shame,
 By nations, sink together, we shall still
 Find solace—knowing what we have learnt to know,
 Rich in true happiness if allowed to be
 Faithful alike in forwarding a day 440
 Of firmer trust, joint labourers in the work
 (Should Providence such grace to us vouchsafe)
 Of their deliverance, surely yet to come.
 Prophets of Nature, we to them will speak
 A lasting inspiration, sanctified
 By reason, blest by faith: what we have loved,
 Others will love, and we will teach them how;
 Instruct them how the mind of man becomes
 A thousand times more beautiful than the earth
 On which he dwells, above this frame of things 450
 (Which, 'mid all revolution in the hopes
 And fears of men, doth still remain unchanged)
 In beauty exalted, as it is itself
 Of quality and fabric more divine.

POEMS NOT APPEARING IN THE
EDITION OF 1849-50

LINES

WRITTEN AS A SCHOOL EXERCISE AT HAWKSHEAD,
ANNO ÆTATIS 14

AND has the Sun his flaming chariot driven
Two hundred times around the ring of heaven,
Since Science first, with all her sacred train,
Beneath yon roof began her heavenly reign ?
While thus I mused, me thought, before mine eyes,
The Power of EDUCATION seemed to rise ;
Not she whose rigid precepts trained the boy
Dead to the sense of every finer joy ;
Nor that vile wretch who bade the tender age
Spurn Reason's law and humour Passion's rage ; 10
But she who trains the generous British youth
In the bright paths of fair majestic Truth :
Emerging slow from Academus' grove
In heavenly majesty she seemed to move.
Stern was her forehead, but a smile serene
'Soften'd the terrors of her awful mien.'
Close at her side were all the powers, design'd
To curb, exalt, reform the tender mind :
With panting breast, now pale as winter snows,
Now flush'd as Hebe, Emulation rose ; 20
Shame follow'd after with reverted eye,
And hue far deeper than the Tyrian dye ;
Last Industry appear'd with steady pace,
A smile sat beaming on her pensive face.
I gazed upon the visionary train,
Threw back my eyes, return'd, and gazed again.
When lo ! the heavenly goddess thus began,
Through all my frame the pleasing accents ran.

'When Superstition left the golden light
And fled indignant to the shades of night ;

When pure Religion rear'd the peaceful breast
 And lull'd the warring passions into rest,
 Drove far away the savage thoughts that roll
 In the dark mansions of the bigot's soul,
 Enlivening Hope display'd her cheerful ray,
 And beam'd on Britain's sons a brighter day ;
 So when on Ocean's face the storm subsides,
 Hush'd are the winds and silent are the tides ;
 The God of day, in all the pomp of light,
 Moves through the vault of heaven, and dissipates the
 night ;

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Wide o'er the main a trembling lustre plays,
 The glittering waves reflect the dazzling blaze ;
 Science with joy saw Superstition fly
 Before the lustre of Religion's eye ;
 With rapture she beheld Britannia smile,
 Clapp'd her strong wings, and sought the cheerful isle,
 The shades of night no more the soul involve,
 She sheds her beam, and, lo ! the shades dissolve ;
 No jarring monks, to gloomy cell confined,
 With mazy rules perplex the weary mind ;
 No shadowy forms entice the soul aside,
 Secure she walks, Philosophy her guide.
 Britain, who long her warriors had adored,
 And deem'd all merit centred in the sword ;
 Britain, who thought to stain the field was fame,
 Now honour'd Edward's less than Bacon's name.
 Her sons no more in listed fields advance
 To ride the ring, or toss the beamy lance ;
 No longer steel their indurated hearts
 To the mild influence of the finer arts ;
 Quick to the secret grotto they retire
 To court majestic truth, or wake the golden lyre ;
 By generous Emulation taught to rise,
 The seats of learning brave the distant skies.
 Then noble Sandys, inspir'd with great design,
 Reared Hawkshead's happy roof, and call'd it mine.
 There have I loved to show the tender age
 The golden precepts of the classic page ;
 To lead the mind to those Elysian plains
 Where, throned in gold, immortal Science reigns ;
 Fair to the view is sacred Truth display'd,
 In all the majesty of light array'd,
 To teach, on rapid wings, the curious soul
 To roam from heaven to heaven, from pole to pole,
 From thence to search the mystic cause of things
 And follow Nature to her secret springs ;

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Nor less to guide the fluctuating youth
 Firm in the sacred paths of moral truth,
 To regulate the mind's disordered frame,
 And quench the passions kindling into flame ; 80
 The glimmering fires of Virtue to enlarge,
 And purge from Vice's dross my tender charge.
 Oft have I said, the paths of Fame pursue,
 And all that Virtue dictates, dare to do ;
 Go to the world, peruse the book of man,
 And learn from thence thy own defects to scan ;
 Severely honest, break no plighted trust,
 But coldly rest not here—be more than just ;
 Join to the rigours of the sires of Rome
 The gentler manners of the private dome ; 90
 When Virtue weeps in agony of woe,
 Teach from the heart the tender tear to flow ;
 If Pleasure's soothing song thy soul entice,
 Or all the gaudy pomp of splendid Vice,
 Arise superior to the Siren's power,
 The wretch, the short-lived vision of an hour ;
 Soon fades her cheek, her blushing beauties fly,
 As fades the chequer'd bow that paints the sky.

'So shall thy sire, whilst hope his breast inspires,
 And wakes anew life's glimmering trembling fires, 100
 Hear Britain's sons rehearse thy praise with joy,
 Look up to heaven, and bless his darling boy.
 If e'er these precepts quell'd the passions' strife,
 If e'er they smooth'd the rugged walks of life,
 If e'er they pointed forth the blissful way
 That guides the spirit to eternal day,
 Do thou, if gratitude inspire thy breast,
 Spurn the soft fetters of lethargic rest.
 Awake, awake ! and snatch the slumbering lyre,
 Let this bright morn and Sandys the song inspire.' 110

I look'd obedience : the celestial Fair
 Smiled like the morn, and vanish'd into air.

1785

SONNET, ON SEEING MISS HELEN MARIA WILLIAMS WEEP AT A TALE OF DISTRESS

SHE wept.—Life's purple tide began to flow
 In languid streams through every thrilling vein ;
 Dim were my swimming eyes—my pulse beat slow,
 And my full heart was swell'd to dear delicious pain.

Life left my loaded heart, and closing eye ;
 A sigh recall'd the wanderer to my breast ;
 Dear was the pause of life, and dear the sigh
 That call'd the wanderer home, and home to rest.
 That tear proclaims—in thee each virtue dwells,
 And bright will shine in misery's midnight hour ; 10
 As the soft star of dewy evening tells
 What radiant fires were drown'd by day's malignant
 pow'r,
 That only wait the darkness of the night
 To cheer the wand'ring wretch with hospitable light.

1787

SWEET WAS THE WALK

SWEET was the walk along the narrow lane
 At noon, the bank and hedgerows all the way
 Shagged with wild pale green tufts of fragrant hay,
 Caught by the hawthorns from the loaded wain,
 Which Age, with many a slow stoop, strove to gain ;
 And Childhood, seeming still more busy, took
 His little rake with cunning sidelong look,
 Sauntering to pluck the strawberries wild unseen.
 Now too, on melancholy's idle dream
 Musing, the lone spot with my soul agrees 10
 Quiet and dark ; for through the thick-wove trees
 Scarce peeps the curious star, till solemn gleams
 The clouded moon, and calls me forth to stray
 Through tall green silent woods and ruins grey.

Before May 1792

THE BIRTH OF LOVE

WHEN Love was born of heavenly line,
 What dire intrigues disturbed *Cythera's* joy !
 Till VENUS cried, ' A mother's heart is mine ;
 None but myself shall nurse my boy.'

But, infant as he was, the child
 In that divine embrace enchanted lay ;
 And, by the beauty of the vase beguil'd,
 Forgot the beverage—and pin'd away.

‘And must my offspring languish in my sight?’
 (Alive to all a mother’s pain,
 The Queen of Beauty thus her court address’d)
 ‘No: Let the most discreet of all my train
 Receive him to her breast:
 Think all, he is the God of young delight.’

Then TENDERNES with CANDOUR join’d,
 And GAIETY the charming office sought;
 Nor even DELICACY stayed behind:
 But none of those fair Graces brought
 Wherewith to nurse the child—and still he pin’d.
 Some fond hearts to COMPLIANCE seem’d inclin’d;
 But she had surely spoil’d the boy:
 And sad experience forbade a thought
 On the wild Goddess of VOLUPTUOUS Joy.

Long undecided lay th’ important choice,
 Till of the beauteous court, at length, a voice
 Pronounced the name of HOPE:—The conscious child
 Stretched forth his little arms and smil’d.

’Tis said ENJOYMENT (who averr’d
 The charge belong’d to her alone)
 Jealous that HOPE had been preferr’d
 Laid snares to make the babe her own.

Of INNOCENCE the garb she took,
 The blushing mien and downcast look;
 And came her services to proffer:
 And HOPE (what has not HOPE believ’d!)
 By that seducing air deceiv’d,
 Accepted of the offer.

It happen’d that, to sleep inclin’d,
 Deluded HOPE for one short hour
 To that false INNOCENCE’s power
 Her little charge consign’d.

The Goddess then her lap with sweetmeats fill’d
 And gave, in handfuls gave, the treacherous store:
 A wild delirium first the infant thrill’d;
 But soon upon her breast he sunk—to wake no more.

THE CONVICT

THE glory of evening was spread through the west ;
—On the slope of a mountain I stood,
While the joy that precedes the calm season of rest
Rang loud through the meadow and wood.

‘And must we then part from a dwelling so fair?’
In the pain of my spirit I said,
And with a deep sadness I turned, to repair
To the cell where the convict is laid.

The thick-ribbèd walls that o’ershadow the gate
Resound ; and the dungeons unfold : 10
I pause ; and at length, through the glimmering grate,
That outcast of pity behold.

His black matted hair on his shoulder is bent,
And deep is the sigh of his breath,
And with steadfast dejection his eyes are intent
On the fetters that link him to death.

‘Tis sorrow enough on that visage to gaze,
That body dismiss’d from his care ;
Yet my fancy has pierced to his heart, and pourtrays
More terrible images there. 20

His bones are consumed, and his life-blood is dried,
With wishes the past to undo ;
And his crime, through the pains that o’erwhelm him,
descried,
Still blackens and grows on his view.

When from the dark synod, or blood-reeking field,
To his chamber the monarch is led,
All soothers of sense their soft virtue shall yield,
And quietness pillow his head.

But if grief, self-consumed, in oblivion would doze,
And conscience her tortures appease, 30
‘Mid tumult and uproar this man must repose ;
In the comfortless vault of disease.

When his fetters at night have so press’d on his limbs,
That the weight can no longer be borne,
If, while a half-slumber his memory bedims,
The wretch on his pallet should turn,

While the jail-mastiff howls at the dull clanking chain,
 From the roots of his hair there shall start
 A thousand sharp punctures of cold-sweating pain,
 And terror shall leap at his heart. 40

But now he half-raises his deep-sunken eye,
 And the motion unsettles a tear ;
 The silence of sorrow it seems to supply,
 And asks of me why I am here.

‘ Poor victim ! no idle intruder has stood
 With o’erweening complacence our state to compare,
 But one, whose first wish is the wish to be good,
 Is come as a brother thy sorrows to share.

‘ At thy name though compassion her nature resign,
 Though in virtue’s proud mouth thy report be a stain,
 My care, if the arm of the mighty were mine, 51
 Would plant thee where yet thou might’st blossom
 again.’

Published 1797

ANDREW JONES

I HATE that Andrew Jones : he’ll breed
 His children up to waste and pillage.
 I wish the press-gang or the drum
 Would, with its rattling music, come,
 And sweep him from the village !

I said not this, because he loves
 Through the long day to swear and tittle ;
 But for the poor dear sake of one
 To whom a foul deed he had done,
 A friendless Man, a travelling Cripple ! 10

For this poor crawling helpless wretch
 Some Horseman who was passing by,
 A penny on the ground had thrown ;
 But the poor Cripple was alone
 And could not stoop—no help was nigh.

Inch-thick the dust lay on the ground
 For it had long been drouthy weather ;
 So with his staff the Cripple wrought
 Among the dust till he had brought
 The halfpennies together. 20

It chanc'd that Andrew pass'd that way
 Just at the time ; and there he found
 The Cripple in the mid-day heat
 Standing alone, and at his feet
 He saw the penny on the ground.

He stooped and took the penny up :
 And when the Cripple nearer drew,
 Quoth Andrew, ' Under half-a-crown,
 What a man finds is all his own,
 And so, my Friend, good-day to you.' 30

And *hence* I say, that Andrew's boys
 Will all be train'd to waste and pillage ;
 And wish'd the press-gang, or the drum
 Would, with its rattling music, come,
 And sweep him from the village !

Probably 1800

ON NATURE'S INVITATION DO I COME

ON Nature's invitation do I come,
 By Reason sanctioned. Can the choice mislead,
 That made the calmest, fairest spot of earth,
 With all its unappropriated good,
 My own ; and not mine only, for with me
 Entrenched—say rather peacefully embowered—
 Under yon orchard, in yon humble cot,
 A younger orphan of a home extinct,
 The only daughter of my parents dwells :
 Aye, think on that, my heart, and cease to stir ; 10
 Pause upon that, and let the breathing frame
 No longer breathe, but all be satisfied.
 Oh, if such silence be not thanks to God
 For what hath been bestowed, then where, where then
 Shall gratitude find rest ? Mine eyes did ne'er
 Fix on a lovely object, nor my mind
 Take pleasure in the midst of happy thoughts,
 But either she, whom now I have, who now
 Divides with me this loved abode, was there,
 Or not far off. Where'er my footsteps turned, 20
 Her voice was like a hidden bird that sang ;
 The thought of her was like a flash of light
 Or an unseen companionship, a breath
 Of fragrance independent of the wind.
 In all my goings, in the new and old
 Of all my meditations, and in this

Favourite of all, in this the most of all. . . .
 Embrace me then, ye hills, and close me in.
 Now in the clear and open day I feel
 Your guardianship: I take it to my heart; 30
 'Tis like the solemn shelter of the night.
 But I would call thee beautiful; for mild,
 And soft, and gay, and beautiful thou art,
 Dear valley, having in thy face a smile,
 Though peaceful, full of gladness. Thou art pleased,
 Pleased with thy crags, and woody steep, thy lake,
 Its one green island, and its winding shores,
 The multitude of little rocky hills,
 Thy church, and cottages of mountain-stone,
 Clustered like stars some few, but single most, 40
 And lurking dimly in their shy retreats,
 Or glancing at each other cheerful looks,
 Like separated stars with clouds between.

Probably 1800

BLEAK SEASON WAS IT, TURBULENT AND BLEAK

BLEAK season was it, turbulent and bleak,
 When hitherward we journeyed, side by side,
 Through bursts of sunshine and through flying showers,
 Paced the long vales, how long they were, and yet
 How fast that length of way was left behind,
 Wensley's rich vale and Sedbergh's naked heights.
 The frosty wind, as if to make amends
 For its keen breath, was aiding to our steps,
 And drove us onward like two ships at sea;
 Or, like two birds, companions in mid-air, 10
 Parted and reunited by the blast.
 Stern was the face of nature; we rejoiced
 In that stern countenance; for our souls thence drew
 A feeling of their strength. The naked trees,
 The icy brooks, as on we passed, appeared
 To question us, 'Whence come ye? To what end?'

Probably 1800

AMONG ALL LOVELY THINGS MY LOVE HAD BEEN

AMONG all lovely things my Love had been;
 Had noted well the stars, all flowers that grew
 About her home; but she had never seen
 A Glow-worm, never one, and this I knew.

While riding near her home one stormy night
 A single Glow-worm did I chance to espy ;
 I gave a fervent welcome to the sight,
 And from my Horse I leapt ; great joy had I.

Upon a leaf the Glow-worm did I lay,
 To bear it with me through the stormy night : 10
 And, as before, it shone without dismay ;
 Albeit putting forth a fainter light.

When to the Dwelling of my Love I came,
 I went into the Orchard quietly ;
 And left the Glow-worm, blessing it by name,
 Laid safely by itself, beneath a Tree.

The whole next day, I hoped, and hoped with fear ;
 At night the Glow-worm shone beneath the Tree :
 I led my Lucy to the spot, ' Look here !'
 Oh ! joy it was for her, and joy for me ! 20

1802

THE TINKER

WHO leads a happy life
 If it's not the merry Tinker ?
 Not too old to have a wife ;
 Not too much a thinker :
 Through the meadows, over stiles,
 Where there are no measured miles,
 Day by day he finds his way
 Among the lonely houses :
 Right before the Farmer's door
 Down he sits ; his brows he knits ; 10
 Then his hammer he rouses ;
 Batter ! batter ! batter !
 He begins to clatter ;
 And while the work is going on
 Right good ale he bowses ;
 And, when it is done, away he is gone ;
 And, in his scarlet coat,
 With a merry note,
 He sings the sun to bed ;
 And, without making a pother, 20
 Finds some place or other
 For his own careless head.

When in the woods the little Fowles
 Begin their merry-making,
 Again the jolly Tinker bowls
 Forth with small leave-taking :
 Through the valley, up the hill ;
 He can't go wrong go where he will :
 Tricks he has twenty,
 And pastimes in plenty ; 30
 He's the terror of boys in the midst of their noise.

When the market Maiden,
 Bringing home her lading,
 Hath passed him in a nook,
 With his outlandish look,
 And visage grim and sooty,
 Bumming, bumming, bumming,
 What is that that's coming ?
 Silly Maid as ever was !
 She thinks that she and all she has 40
 Will be the Tinker's booty ;
 At the pretty Maiden's dread
 The Tinker shakes his head,
 Laughing, laughing, laughing,
 As if he would laugh himself dead.
 And thus with work or none,
 The Tinker lives in fun,
 With a light soul to cover him ;
 And sorrow and care blow over him,
 Whether he's up or a-bed.

April 27, 28,
 1802

WRITTEN IN A GROTTTO

O MOON ! if e'er I joyed when thy soft light
 Danc'd to the murmuring rill on Lomond's wave,
 Or sighed for thy sweet presence some dark night,
 When thou wert hidden in thy monthly grave ;
 If e'er, on wings which active fancy gave,
 I sought thy golden vale with dancing flight,
 Then, stretcht at ease in some sequestered cave,
 Gaz'd on thy lovely Nymphs with fond delight,
 Thy Nymphs with more than earthly beauty bright ;
 If e'er thy beam, as Smyrna's shepherds tell, 10
 Soft as the gentle kiss of amorous maid
 On the closed eyes of young Endymion fell,
 That he might wake to clasp thee in the shade :
 Each night, while I recline within this cell,
 Guide hither, O sweet Moon, the maid I love so well.

Published 1802

THE RAINS AT LENGTH HAVE CEASED

THE rains at length have ceas'd, the winds are still'd,
The stars shine brightly between clouds at rest,
And as a cavern is with darkness fill'd,
The Vale is by a mighty sound possess'd.

SONNET

I FIND it written of Simonides
That travelling in strange countries once he found
A corpse that lay expiring on the ground,
For which, with pain, he caused due obsequies
To be performed, and paid all holy fees.
Soon after, this man's Ghost unto him came
And told him not to sail as was his aim,
On board a ship then ready for the seas.
Simonides, admonished by the ghost,
Remained behind ; the ship the following day 10
Set sail, was wrecked, and all on board was lost.
Thus was the tenderest Poet that could be,
Who sang in ancient Greece his loving lay,
Saved out of many by his piety. Published 1803

INSCRIPTION FOR A SUMMER-HOUSE IN THE
ORCHARD, TOWN-END, GRASMERE

NO whimsy of the purse is here,
No pleasure-house forlorn ;
Use, comfort, do this roof endear ;
A tributary shed to cheer
The little cottage that is near,
To help it and adorn. 1804

GEORGE AND SARAH GREEN

WHO weeps for strangers ? Many wept
For George and Sarah Green ;
Wept for that pair's unhappy fate,
Whose grave may here be seen.

By night, upon these stormy fells,
Did wife and husband roam ;
Six little ones at home had left,
And could not find that home.

For *any* dwelling-place of man
 As vainly did they seek. 10
He perish'd; and a voice was heard—
 The widow's lonely shriek.

Not many steps, and she was left
 A body without life—
 A few short steps were the chain that bound
 The husband to the wife.

Now do those sternly-featured hills
 Look gently on this grave;
 And quiet *now* are the depths of air,
 As a sea without a wave. 20

But deeper lies the heart of peace
 In quiet more profound;
 The heart of quietness is here
 Within this churchyard bound.

And from all agony of mind
 It keeps them safe, and far
 From fear and grief, and from all need
 Of sun or guiding star

O darkness of the grave! how deep,
 After that living night— 30
 That last and dreary living one
 Of sorrow and affright?

O sacred marriage-bed of death,
 That keeps them side by side
 In bond of peace, in bond of love,
 That may not be untied! 1808

THROUGH CUMBRIAN WILDS, IN MANY A MOUNTAIN CAVE

THROUGH Cumbrian wilds, in many a mountain cave,
 The pastoral Muse laments the Wheel—no more
 Engaged, near blazing hearth on clean swept floor,
 In tasks which guardian Angels might approve,
 Friendly the weight of leisure to remove,
 And to beguile the lassitude of ease;
 Gracious to all the dear dependencies
 Of house and field,—to plenty, peace, and love.
 There too did *Fancy* prize the murmuring wheel;
 For sympathies, inexplicably fine, 10

Instilled a confidence—how sweet to feel !
 That ever in the night-calm, when the Sheep
 Upon their grassy beds lay couch'd in sleep,
 The quickening spindle drew a trustier line.

Probably 1812

MY SON ! BEHOLD THE TIDE ALREADY SPENT

MY Son ! behold the Tide already spent
 That rose, and steadily advanced to fill
 The shores and channels, working Nature's will
 Among the mazy streams that backward went,
 And in the sluggish Ports where ships were pent.
 And now, its task performed, the flood stands still
 At the green base of many an inland hill,
 In placid beauty and entire content.
 Such the repose that Sage and Hero find,
 Such measured rest the diligent and good 10
 Of humbler name, whose souls do like the flood
 Of ocean press right on, or gently wind,
 Neither to be diverted nor withstood
 Until they reach the bounds by Heaven assigned.

Perhaps 1812

TRANSLATION OF PART OF THE FIRST BOOK OF THE ÆNEID

TO THE EDITORS OF THE 'PHILOLOGICAL MUSEUM'

YOUR letter, reminding me of an expectation I some time since held out to you of allowing some specimens of my translation from the 'Æneid' to be printed in the *Philological Museum*, was not very acceptable; for I had abandoned the thought of ever sending into the world any part of that experiment—for it was nothing more—an experiment begun for amusement, and I now think a less fortunate one than when I first named it to you. Having been displeased in modern translations with the additions of incongruous matter, I began to translate with a resolve to keep clear of that fault, by adding nothing; but I became convinced that a spirited translation can scarcely be accomplished in the English language without admitting a principle of compensation. On this point, however, I do not wish to insist, and merely send the following passage, taken at random, from a wish to comply with your request.—W. W.

BUT Cytherea, studious to invent
 Arts yet untried, upon new counsels bent,
 Resolves that Cupid, chang'd in form and face
 To young Ascanius, should assume his place;
 Present the maddening gifts, and kindle heat
 Of passion at the bosom's inmost seat.
 She dreads the treacherous house, the double tongue;
 She burns, she frets—by Juno's rancour stung;

The calm of night is powerless to remove
These cares, and thus she speaks to winged Love: 10

‘O son, my strength, my power! who dost despise
(What, save thyself, none dares through earth and skies)
The giant-quelling bolts of Jove, I flee,
O son, a suppliant to thy deity!
What perils meet Æneas in his course,
How Juno’s hate with unrelenting force
Pursues thy brother—this to thee is known;
And oft-times hast thou made my griefs thine own.
Him now the generous Dido by soft chains
Of bland entreaty at her court detains; 20
Junonian hospitalities prepare
Such apt occasion that I dread a snare.
Hence, ere some hostile God can intervene,
Would I, by previous wiles, inflame the queen
With passion for Æneas, such strong love
That at my beck, mine only, she shall move.
Hear, and assist;—the father’s mandate calls
His young Ascanius to the Tyrian walls;
He comes, my dear delight,—and costliest things
Preserv’d from fire and flood for presents brings. 30
Him will I take, and in close covert keep,
‘Mid groves Idalian, lull’d to gentle sleep,
Or on Cythera’s far-sequestered steep,
That he may neither know what hope is mine,
Nor by his presence traverse the design.
Do thou, but for a single night’s brief space,
Dissemble; be that boy in form and face!
And when enraptured Dido shall receive
Thee to her arms, and kisses interweave
With many a fond embrace, while joy runs high, 40
And goblets crown the proud festivity,
Instil thy subtle poison, and inspire,
At every touch, an unsuspected fire.’

Love, at the word, before his mother’s sight
Puts off his wings, and walks, with proud delight,
Like young Iulus; but the gentlest dew
Of slumber Venus sheds, to circumfuse
The true Ascanius steep’d in placid rest;
Then wafts him, cherish’d on her careful breast,
Through upper air to an Idalian glade, 50
Where he on soft *amaracus* is laid,
With breathing flowers embraced, and fragrant shade
But Cupid, following cheerily his guide
Achates, with the gifts to Carthage hied;

And, as the hall he entered, there, between
 The sharers of her golden couch, was seen
 Reclin'd in festal pomp the Tyrian queen.
 The Trojans too (Æneas at their head),
 On couches lie, with purple overspread :
 Meantime in canisters is heap'd the bread, 60
 Pellucid water for the hands is borne,
 And napkins of smooth texture, finely shorn.
 Within are fifty handmaids, who prepare,
 As they in order stand, the dainty fare ;
 And fume the household deities with store
 Of odorous incense ; while a hundred more
 Match'd with an equal number of like age,
 But each of manly sex, a docile page,
 Marshal the banquet, giving with due grace
 To cup or viand its appointed place. 70
 The Tyrians rushing in, an eager band,
 Their painted couches seek, obedient to command.
 They look with wonder on the gifts—they gaze
 Upon Iulus, dazzled with the rays
 That from his ardent countenance are flung,
 And charm'd to hear his simulating tongue ;
 Nor pass unprais'd the robe and veil divine,
 Round which the yellow flowers and wandering foliage
 twine.

But chiefly Dido, to the coming ill
 Devoted, strives in vain her vast desires to fill ; 80
 She views the gifts ; upon the child then turns
 Insatiable looks, and gazing burns.
 To ease a father's cheated love he hung
 Upon Æneas, and around him clung ;
 Then seeks the queen ; with her his arts he tries ;
 She fastens on the boy enamour'd eyes,
 Clasps in her arms, nor weens (O lot unblest !)
 How great a God, incumbent o'er her breast,
 Would fill it with his spirit. He, to please
 His Acidalian mother, by degrees 90
 Blots out Sichæus, studious to remove
 The dead, by influx of a living love,
 By stealthy entrance of a perilous guest,
 Troubling a heart that had been long at rest.

Now when the viands were withdrawn, and ceas'd
 The first division of the splendid feast,
 While round a vacant board the chiefs recline,
 Huge goblets are brought forth ; they crown the wine ;

Voices of gladness roll the walls around ;
 Those gladsome voices from the courts rebound ; 100
 From gilded rafters many a blazing light
 Depends, and torches overcome the night.
 The minutes fly—till, at the queen's command,
 A bowl of state is offered to her hand :
 Then she, as Belus wont, and all the line
 From Belus, filled it to the brim with wine ;
 Silence ensued. ' O Jupiter, whose care
 Is hospitable dealing, grant my prayer !
 Productive day be this of lasting joy
 To Tyrians, and these exiles driven from Troy ; 110
 A day to future generations dear !
 Let Bacchus, donor of soul-quick'ning cheer,
 Be present ; kindly Juno, be thou near !
 And, Tyrians, may your choicest favours wait
 Upon this hour, the bond to celebrate !'
 She spake and shed an offering on the board ;
 Then sipp'd the bowl whence she the wine had pour'd
 And gave to Bitias, urging the prompt lord ;
 He rais'd the bowl, and took a long deep draught ;
 Then every chief in turn the beverage quaff'd. 120

Graced with redundant hair, Iopas sings
 The lore of Atlas, to resounding strings,
 The labours of the Sun, the lunar wanderings ;
 Whence human kind, and brute ; what natural powers
 Engender lightning, whence are falling showers.
 He chaunts Arcturus,—that fraternal twain
 The glittering Bears,—the Pleiads fraught with rain ;
 —Why suns in winter, shunning heaven's steep heights
 Post seaward,—what impedes the tardy nights.
 The learned song from Tyrian hearers draws 130
 Loud shouts,—the Trojans echo the applause.
 —But, lengthening out the night with converse new,
 Large draughts of love unhappy Dido drew ;
 Of Priam ask'd, of Hector,—o'er and o'er—
 What arms the son of bright Aurora wore ;—
 What steeds the car of Diomed could boast ;
 Among the leaders of the Grecian host
 How looked Achilles—their dread paramount—
 ' But nay—the fatal wiles, O guest, recount,
 Retrace the Grecian cunning from its source, 140
 Your own grief and your friends'—your wandering
 course ;
 For now, till this seventh summer have ye rang'd
 The sea, or trod the earth, to peace estrang'd.'

Between 1816 and 1832

THE SCOTTISH BROOM ON BIRD-NEST BRAE

THE Scottish Broom on Bird-nest brae

Twelve tedious years ago,
When many plants strange blossoms bore
That puzzled high and low,
A not unnatural longing felt,
What longing would ye know?
Why, friend, to deck her supple twigs
With *yellow* in full blow.

To Lowther Castle she addressed
A prayer both bold and sly
(For all the blooms on Bird-nest brae
Can talk and speechify)
That flattering breezes blowing thence
Their succour would supply;
Then she would instantly put forth
A flag of *yellow* dye.

10

But from the Castle turret blew
A dull forbidding blast,
Which the poor broom no sooner felt
Than she shrank up so fast;
Her *wished-for* yellow she foreswore,
And since that time has cast
Fond looks on colours three or four
And put forth *Blue* at last.

20

And now, my lads, the Election comes
In June's sunshining hours
When every field and bank and brae
Is clad with yellow flowers.
While faction Blue from shops and booths
Tricks out her blustering powers,
Lo! Smiling Nature's lavish hand
Has furnished wreaths for ours.

30

Probably 1818

PLACARD FOR A POLL BEARING AN OLD SHIRT

IF money's slack,
The shirt on my back
Shall off, and go to the hammer:
Though I sell shirt and skin,
By Jove I'll be in,
And raise up a radical clamor!

Probably 1818

SONNET

AUTHOR'S VOYAGE DOWN THE RHINE
(THIRTY YEARS AGO)

THE confidence of Youth our only Art,
And Hope gay Pilot of the bold design,
We saw the living Landscapes of the Rhine,
Reach after reach, salute us and depart;
Slow sink the Spires,—and up again they start!
But who shall count the Towers as they recline
O'er the dark steeps, or on the horizon line
Striding, with shattered crests, the eye athwart?
More touching still, more perfect was the pleasure,
When hurrying forward till the slack'ning stream 10
Spread like a spacious Mere, we there could measure
A smooth free course along the watery gleam,
Think calmly on the past, and mark at leisure
Features which else had vanished like a dream.

1820 or 1821

CRITICS, RIGHT HONOURABLE BARD . . .

PROF. KNIGHT (Eversley Wordsworth, vol. viii. p. 271) writes: 'I have found this in a catalogue of Autograph Letters, and have no knowledge of its date, or of the Bard referred to. Solomon Gesner wrote a poem on *The Death of Abel*, which was translated into English. See footnote to *The Prelude*, Book vii. l. 564.' [It is curious that it should have escaped Prof. Knight's notice that the 'right honourable Bard' was Lord Byron, who dedicated his *Cain*, *A Mystery* to Sir Walter Scott in 1821.—N. C. S.]

CRITICS, right honourable Bard, decree
Laurels to some, a night-shade wreath to thee,
Whose muse a sure though late revenge hath ta'en
Of harmless Abel's death, by murdering Cain.

ON CAIN, A MYSTERY, DEDICATED TO SIR WALTER SCOTT:—

A GERMAN Haggis from receipt
Of him who cooked the death of Abel,
And sent 'warm-reeking, rich and sweet,'
From Venice to Sir Walter's table.

COMPOSED WHEN A PROBABILITY EXISTED OF
OUR BEING OBLIGED TO QUIT RYDAL
MOUNT AS A RESIDENCE

THE doubt to which a wavering hope had clung
Is fled; we must depart, willing or not;
Sky-piercing Hills! must bid farewell to you

And all that ye look down upon with pride,
 With tenderness embosom ; to your paths ;
 And pleasant dwellings, to familiar trees
 And wild-flowers known as well as if our hands
 Had tended them : and O pellucid Spring !
 Unheard of, save in one small hamlet, here
 Not undistinguished, for of wells that ooze 10
 Or founts that gurgle from yon craggy steep,
 Their common sire, thou only bear'st his name.
 Insensibly the foretaste of this parting
 Hath ruled my steps, and seals me to thy side,
 Mindful that thou (ah ! wherefore by my Muse
 So long unthanked) hast cheered a simple board
 With beverage pure as ever fixed the choice
 Of hermit, dubious where to scoop his cell ;
 Which Persian kings might envy ; and thy meek
 And gentle aspect oft has ministered 20
 To finer uses. They for me must cease ;
 Days will pass on, the year, if years be given,
 Fade,—and the moralising mind derive
 No lessons from the presence of a Power
 By the inconstant nature we inherit
 Unmatched in delicate beneficence ;
 For neither unremitting rains avail
 To swell thee into voice ; nor longest drought
 Thy bounty stints, nor can thy beauty mar,
 Beauty not therefore wanting change to stir 30
 The fancy pleased by spectacles unlooked for.

Nor yet, perchance, translucent Spring, had tolled
 The Norman curfew bell when human hands
 First offered help that the deficient rock
 Might overarch thee, from pernicious heat
 Defended, and appropriate to man's need.
 Such ties will not be severed : but, when we
 Are gone, what summer loiterer will regard,
 Inquisitive the countenance, will peruse,
 Pleased to detect the dimpling stir of life, 40
 The breathing faculty with which thou yield'st
 (Tho' a mere goblet to the careless eye)
 Boons inexhaustible ? Who, hurrying on
 With a step quickened by November's cold,
 Shall pause, the skill admiring that can work
 Upon thy chance-defilements—withered twigs
 That, lodged within thy crystal depths, seem bright,
 As if they from a silver tree had fallen—
 And oaken leaves that, driven by whirling blasts,

Sunk down, and lay immersed in dead repose 50
 For Time's invisible tooth to prey upon,
 Unsightly objects and uncoveted,
 Till thou with crystal bead-drops didst encrust
 Their skeletons, turned to brilliant ornaments.
 But, from thy bosom, should some venturous hand
 Abstract those gleaming relics, and uplift them,
 However gently, toward the vulgar air,
 At once their tender brightness disappears,
 Leaving the intermeddler to upbraid
 His folly. Thus (I feel it while I speak), 60
 Thus, with the fibres of these thoughts it fares ;
 And oh ! how much, of all that love creates
 Or beautifies, like changes undergoes,
 Suffers like loss when drawn out of the soul,
 Its silent laboratory ! Words should say
 (Could they depict the marvels of thy cell)
 How often I have marked a plumy fern
 From the live rock with grace inimitable
 Bending its apex toward a paler self
 Reflected all in perfect lineaments— 70
 Shadow and substance kissing point to point
 In mutual stillness ; or, if some faint breeze
 Entering the cell gave restlessness to one,
 The other, glassed in thy unruffled breast,
 Partook of every motion, met, retired,
 And met again. Such playful sympathy,
 Such delicate caress as in the shape
 Of this green plant had aptly recompensed
 For baffled lips and disappointed arms
 And hopeless pangs the spirit of that youth, 80
 The fair Narcissus, by some pitying God
 Changed to a crimson flower ; when he, whose pride
 Provoked a retribution too severe,
 Had pined ; upon his watery duplicate
 Wasting that love the nymphs implored in vain.

Thus while my fancy wanders, thou, clear Spring,
 Moved (shall I say ?) like a dear friend who meets
 A parting moment with her loveliest look,
 And seemingly her happiest, look so fair
 It frustrates its own purpose, and recalls 90
 The grieved one whom it meant to send away,
 Dost tempt me by disclosures exquisite
 To linger, bending over thee : for now,
 What witchcraft, mild enchantress, may with thee
 Compare ! thy earthly bed a moment past

Palpable to sight as the dry ground,
Eludes perception, not by rippling air
Concealed, nor through effect of some impure
Upstirring but, abstracted by a charm
Of my own cunning, earth mysteriously 100
From under thee hath vanished, and slant beams,
The silent inquest of a western sun,
Assisting, lucid well-spring ! thou revealest
Communion without check of herbs and flowers
And the vault's hoary sides to which they cling,
Imaged in downward show ; the flower, the herbs,
These not of earthly texture, and the vault
Not *there* diminutive, but through a scale
Of vision less and less distinct, descending
To gloom imperishable. So (if truths 110
The highest condescend to be set forth
By processes minute), even so—when thought
Wins help from something greater than herself—
Is the firm basis of habitual sense
Supplanted, not for treacherous vacancy
And blank dissociation from a world
We love, but that the residues of flesh,
Mirrored, yet not too strictly, may refine
To Spirit ; for the idealising Soul
Time wears the features of Eternity ; 120
And Nature deepens into Nature's God.

Millions of kneeling Hindoos at this day
Bow to the watery element, adored
In their vast stream, and if an age hath been
(As books and haply votive altars vouch)
When British floods were worshipped, some faint trace
Of that idolatry, through monkish rites
Transmitted far as living memory,
Might wait on thee, a silent monitor,
On thee, bright Spring, a bashful little one, 130
Yet to the measure of thy promises
True ; as the mightiest ; upon thee sequestered
For meditation, nor inopportune
For social interest such as I have shared.
Peace to the sober matron who shall dip
Her pitcher here at early dawn, by me
No longer greeted—to the tottering sire,
For whom like service, now and then his choice,
Relieves the tedious holiday of age—
Thoughts raised above the Earth while here he sits
Feeding on sunshine—to the blushing girl 141

Who here forgets her errand, nothing loth
To be waylaid by her betrothèd, peace
And pleasure sobered down to happiness!

But should these hills be ranged by one whose soul
Scorning love-whispers shrinks from love itself
As Fancy's snare for female vanity,
Here may the aspirant find a trysting-place
For loftier intercourse. The Muses, crowned
With wreaths that have not faded to this hour, 150
Sprung from high Jove, of sage Mnemosyne
Enamoured, so the fable runs; but they
Certes were self-taught damsels, scattered births
Of many a Grecian vale, who sought not praise,
And, heedless even of listeners, warbled out
Their own emotions given to mountain air
In notes which mountain echoes would take up
Boldly and bear away to softer life;
Hence deified as sisters they were bound
Together in a never-dying choir; 160
Who with their Hippocrene and grottoed fount
Of Castaly attest that Woman's heart
Was in the limpid age of this stained world
The most assured seat of [poesy?]
And new-born waters deemed the happiest source
Of inspiration for the conscious lyre.

Lured by the crystal element in times
Stormy and fierce, the Maid of Arc withdrew
From human converse to frequent alone
The Fountain of the Fairies. What to her 170
Smooth summer dreams, old favours of the place,
Pageant and revels of blithe elves—to her
Whose country groan'd under a foreign scourge?
She pondered murmurs that attuned her ear
For the reception of far other sounds
Than their too happy minstrelsy,—a voice
Reached her with supernatural mandates charged
More awful than the chambers of dark earth
Have virtue to send forth. Upon the marge
Of the benignant fountain, while she stood 180
Gazing intensely, the translucent lymph
Darkened beneath the shadow of her thoughts
As if swift clouds swept o'er it, or it caught
War's tincture, 'mid the forest green and still,
Turned into blood before her heart-sick eye.
Erelong, forsaking all her natural haunts,

I, WHOSE PRETTY VOICE YOU HEAR 437

All her accustomed offices and cares
Relinquishing, but treasuring every law
And grace of feminine humanity,
The chosen rustic urged a warlike steed 190
Toward the beleaguered city, in the might
Of prophecy, accoutred to fulfil
At the sword's point, visions conceived in love.

The cloud of rooks descending through mid air
Softens its evening uproar towards a close
Near and more near; for this protracted strain
A warning not unwelcome. Fare thee well!
Emblem of equanimity and truth,
Farewell!—if thy composure be not ours
Yet as thou still when we are gone wilt keep 200
Thy living chaplet of fresh flowers and fern,
Cherished in shade though peeped at by the sun;
So shall our bosoms feel a covert growth
Of grateful recollections, tribute due
To thy obscure and modest attributes,
To thee, dear Spring, and all-sustaining Heaven!

1826

I, WHOSE PRETTY VOICE YOU HEAR

I WHOSE pretty Voice you hear,
Lady, (you will think it queer)
Have a Mother, once a Statue;
I, thus boldly looking at you,
Do the name of Paphus bear,
Fam'd Pygmalion's Son and Heir,
By that wondrous marble wife
That from Venus took her life.
Cupid's nephew then am I,
Nor unskill'd his darts to ply; 10
But from Him I crav'd no warrant,
Coming thus to seek my Parent;
Not equipp'd with bow and quiver
Her by menace to deliver,
But resolv'd with filial care
Her captivity to share.
Hence, while on your toilet, She
Is doom'd a Pincushion to be,
By her side I'll take my place,
As a humble Needle-case; 20
Furnish'd too with dainty thread,
For a Sempstress thorough-bred.

Then let both be kindly treated,
 Till the Term, for which she's fated
 Durance to sustain, be over;
 So will I ensure a Lover,
 Lady! to your heart's content;
 But, on harshness are you bent,
 Bitterly shall you repent,
 When to Cyprus back I go
 And take up my Uncle's bow.

30

RYDAL MOUNT
Shortest Day, 1826

Composed, and in part transcribed, for Fanny
 Barlow, by her affectionate friend

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

WRITTEN IN THE STRANGERS' BOOK AT
 'THE STATION,' OPPOSITE BOWNESS

[THE Strangers' Book contained the following entry, quoted by Prof. Knight: 'Lord and Lady Darlington, Lady Vane, Miss Taylor, and Captain Stamp pronounce this Lake superior to Lac de Genève, Lago de Como, Lago Maggiore, L'Eau de Zurich, Loch Lomond, Loch Katerine, or the Lakes of Killarney.']

MY Lord and Lady Darlington,
 I would not speak in snarling tone;
 Nor to you, good Lady Vane,
 Would I give a moment's pain;
 Nor Miss Taylor, Captain Stamp,
 Would I your flights of *memory* cramp.
 Yet, having spent a summer's day
 On the green margin of Loch Tay,
 And doubled (prospect ever bettering)
 The mazy reaches of Loch Katerine,
 And more than once been free at Luss
 Loch Lomond's beauties to discuss,
 And wished, at least, to hear the blarney
 Of the sly boatmen of Killarney,
 And dipped my hand in dancing wave
 Of Eau de Zurich, Lac Genève,
 And bowed to many a major-domo
 On stately terraces of Como,
 And seen the Simplon's forehead hoary,
 Reclined on Lago Maggiore,—
 At breathless eventide at rest
 On the broad water's placid breast—
 I, not insensible, Heaven knows,
 To all the charms this Station shows,
 Must tell you, Captain, Lord, and Ladies,
 For honest worth one poet's trade is,
 That your praise appears to me
 Folly's own hyperbole.

10

20

1829

TO THE UTILITARIANS

A VAUNT this economic rage !
 What would it bring ?—an iron age,
 Where Fact with heartless search explored
 Shall be Imagination's Lord,
 And sway with absolute controul
 The god-like functions of the Soul.
 Not *thus* can Knowledge elevate
 Our Nature from her fallen state.
 With sober Reason Faith unites
 To vindicate the ideal rights
 Of human-kind—the tone agreeing
 Of objects with internal seeing,
 Of effort with the end of Being.

10

1833

A CENTO MADE BY WORDSWORTH

For printing [the following piece] some reason should be given, as not a word of it is original : it is simply a fine stanza of Akenside, connected with a still finer from Beattie, by a couplet from Thomson. This practice, in which the author sometimes indulges, of linking together, in his own mind, favourite passages from different authors, seems in itself unobjectionable : but, as the *publishing* such compilations might lead to confusion in literature, he should deem himself inexcusable in giving this specimen, were it not from a hope that it might open to others a harmless source of *private* gratification.—W. W.

THRONED in the Sun's descending car
 What Power unseen diffuses far
 This tenderness of mind ?
 What Genius smiles on yonder flood ?
 What God in whispers from the wood
 Bids every thought be kind ?

O ever pleasing Solitude,
 Companion of the wise and good,
 Thy shades, thy silence, now be mine,
 Thy charms my only theme ;
 My haunt the hollow cliff whose Pine
 Waves o'er the gloomy stream ;
 Whence the scared Owl on pinions grey
 Breaks from the rustling boughs,
 And down the lone vale sails away
 To more profound repose !

10

Published 1835

SQUIB

S AID red-ribboned Evans :
 ' My legions in Spain
 Were at sixes and sevens ;
 Now they 're famished or slain :
 But no fault of mine,
 For, like brave Philip Sidney,
 In campaigning I shine,
 A true knight of his kidney.
 Sound flogging and fighting
 No chief, on my troth,
 E'er took such delight in
 As I in them both.
 Fontarabbia can tell
 How my eyes watched the foe,
 Hernani knows well
 That our feet are not slow ;
 Our hospitals, too,
 They are matchless in story ;
 Where her thousands Fate slew,
 All panting for glory.'
 Alas for this Hero !
 His fame touched the skies,
 Then fell below zero,
 Never, never to rise !
 For him to Westminster
 Did Prudence convey,
 There safe as a Spinster
 The patriot to play.
 But why be so glad on
 His feats or his fall ?
 He 's got his red ribbon
 And laughs at us all.

10

20

30

Probably 1838

EPIGRAM

SENT by Mrs. Wordsworth to Crabb Robinson in 1836 in answer to the inquiry if her husband had ever written an epigram.

'To show you that we *can* write an epigram, we do not say a good one :

ON AN EVENT IN COL. EVANS'S REDOUBTED
PERFORMANCES IN SPAIN

THE Ball whizz'd by,—it grazed his ear,
And whispered as it flew,
"I only touch—not take—don't fear,
For both, my honest Buccaneer!
Are to the pillory due."

'The producer thinks it not amiss, as being murmured
between sleep and awake over the fire while thinking of you
last night.'

TRANSLATIONS

FROM MICHELANGELO

GRATEFUL is Sleep; my life in stone bound fast
More grateful still: while wrong and shame shall last,
On me can Time no happier state bestow
Than to be left unconscious of the woe.
Ah then, lest you awaken me, speak low.

THE SAME

GRATEFUL is Sleep, more grateful still to be
Of marble; for while shameless wrong and woe
Prevail, 'tis best to neither hear nor see.
Then wake me not, I pray you. Hush, speak low.

FROM THE LATIN OF THOMAS WARTON

COME, gentle Sleep, Death's image tho' thou art,
Come, share my couch, nor speedily depart;
How sweet thus living without life to lie,
Thus without death how sweet it is to die.

TRANSLATION OF TASSO'S SONNET

Vasco, le cui felici ardite antenne . . .

[V]ASCO, whose bold and happy mainyard spread
Sunward thy sails where dawning glory dyed
Heaven's orient gate; whose westering prow the tide
Clove, where the day-star bows him to his bed:
Not sterner toil than thine, or strife more dread,
Or nobler laud to nobler lyre allied—

His, who did baffled Polypheme deride,
 Or his, whose searing shaft the Harpy fled.]
 Camoëns, he the accomplished and the good,
 Gave to thy fame a more illustrious flight 10
 Than that brave vessel, though she sailed so far;
 Through him her course along the Austral flood
 Is known to all beneath the polar star,
 Through him the Antipodes in thy name delight.

TRANSLATION OF THE ATHENIAN SONG
 IN HONOUR OF HARMODIUS
 AND ARISTOGITON

AND I will bear my vengeful blade
 With the myrtle's boughs arrayed,
 As Harmodius before,
 As Aristogiton bore,

When the tyrant's heart they gor'd
 With the myrtle-braided sword,
 Gave to triumph Freedom's cause,
 Gave to Athens equal laws.

Where, unnumbered with the dead,
 Dear Harmodius, art thou fled? 10
 Athens sings 'tis thine to rest
 In the islands of the blest,
 Where Achilles swift of feet
 And the brave Tydides meet.

I will bear my vengeful blade
 With the myrtle boughs arrayed,
 As Harmodius before,
 As Aristogiton bore,
 When in Athens' festal time
 The tyrant felt their arm sublime. 20

Let thy name, Harmodius dear,
 Live through Heaven's eternal year:
 Long as Heaven and Earth survive,
 Dear Aristogiton, live;
 With the myrtle-braided sword
 Ye the tyrant's bosom gor'd,
 Gave to triumph Freedom's cause,
 Gave to Athens equal laws.

Between 1800 and 1811 (?)

INSCRIPTION ON A ROCK AT RYDAL MOUNT

WOULDST thou be gathered to Christ's chosen
 flock,
 Shun the broad way too easily explored,
 And let thy path be hewn out of the Rock,
 The living Rock of God's eternal Word.

1838

PROTEST AGAINST THE BALLOT

FORTH rushed from Envy sprung and Self-conceit,
 A Power misnamed the SPIRIT of REFORM,
 And through the astonished Island swept in storm,
 Threatening to lay all Orders at her feet
 That crossed her way. Now stoops she to entreat
 Licence to hide at intervals her head
 Where she may work, safe, undisquieted,
 In a close Box, covert for Justice meet.
 St. George of England! keep a watchful eye
 Fixed on the Suitor; frustrate her request—
 Stifle her hope; for, if the State comply,
 From such Pandorian gift may come a Pest
 Worse than the Dragon that bowed low his crest,
 Pierced by thy spear in glorious victory.

10

1838

A POET TO HIS GRANDCHILD

SEQUEL TO 'A PLEA FOR AUTHORS'

SON of my buried Son, while thus thy hand
 Is clasping mine, it saddens me to think
 How Want may press thee down, and with thee sink
 Thy Children left unfit, through vain demand
 Of culture, even to feel or understand
 My simplest Lay that to their memory
 May cling;—hard fate! which haply need not be
 Did Justice mould the Statutes of the Land.
 A Book time-cherished and an honoured name
 Are high rewards; but bound they Nature's claim
 Or Reason's? No—hopes spun in timid line
 From out the bosom of a modest home
 Extend through unambitious years to come,
 My careless Little-one, for thee and thine!

10

May 23, 1838

ON A PORTRAIT OF ISABELLA FENWICK
PAINTED BY MARGARET GILLIES

WE gaze—nor grieve to think that we must die,
But that the precious love this friend hath
sown

Within our hearts, the love whose flower hath blown
Bright as if heaven were ever in its eye,
Will pass so soon from human memory ;
And not by strangers to our blood alone,
But by our best descendants be unknown,
Unthought of—this may surely claim a sigh.
Yet, blessed Art, we yield not to dejection ;
Thou against Time so feelingly dost strive. 10
Where'er, preserved in this most true reflection,
An image of her soul is kept alive,
Some lingering fragrance of the pure affection,
Whose flower with us will vanish, must survive.

RYDAL MOUNT, *New Year's Day*, 1840

TO I. F.

THE star which comes at close of day to shine
More heavenly bright than when it leads the
morn,
Is Friendship's emblem, whether the forlorn
She visiteth, or, shedding light benign
Through shades that solemnise Life's calm decline,
Doth make the happy happier. This have we
Learnt, Isabel, from thy society,
Which now we too unwillingly resign
Though for brief absence. But farewell ! the page
Glimmers before my sight through thankful tears, 10
Such as start forth, not seldom, to approve
Our truth, when we, old yet unchilled by age,
Call thee, though known but for a few fleet years,
The heart-affianced sister of our love !

RYDAL MOUNT, *Feb.* 1840

OH BOUNTY WITHOUT MEASURE,
WHILE THE GRACE

OH Bounty without measure, while the Grace
Of Heaven doth in such wise from humblest
springs
Pour pleasures forth, and solaces that trace
A mazy course along familiar things,
Well may our hearts have faith that blessings come
Streaming from points above the starry sky,
With angels, when their own untroubled home
They leave and speed on mighty embassy
To visit earthly chambers,—and for whom?
Yea, both for souls who God's forbearance try, 10
And those that seek his help and for his mercy sigh.

7th April 1840. My 70th Birthday

WHEN SEVERN'S SWEEPING FLOOD
HAD OVERTHROWN

WHEN Severn's sweeping flood had overthrown
St. Mary's Church, the preacher then would
cry:—
'Thus, Christian people, God his might hath shown
That ye to him your love may testify;
Haste, and rebuild the pile.'—But not a stone
Resumed its place. Age after age went by,
And Heaven still lacked its due, though piety
In secret did, we trust, her loss bemoan.
But now her Spirit hath put forth its claim
In Power, and Poesy would lend her voice; 10
Let the new Church be worthy of its aim,
That in its beauty Cardiff may rejoice!
Oh! in the past if cause there was for shame,
Let not our times halt in their better choice.

RYDAL MOUNT, Jan 23, 1842

THE EAGLE AND THE DOVE

SHADE of Caractacus, if spirits love
The cause they fought for in their earthly home,
To see the Eagle ruffled by the Dove
May soothe thy memory of the chains of Rome.

These children claim thee for their sire ; the breath
Of thy renown, from Cambrian mountains, fans
A flame within them that despises death
And glorifies the truant youth of Vannes.

With thy own scorn of tyrants they advance,
But truth divine has sanctified their rage, 10
A silver cross enchased with Flowers of France
Their badge, attests the holy fight they wage.

The shrill defiance of the young crusade
Their veteran foes mock as an idle noise ;
But unto Faith and Loyalty comes aid
From Heaven, gigantic force to beardless boys.

Published 1842

LINES

INSCRIBED IN A COPY OF HIS POEMS SENT TO THE
QUEEN FOR THE ROYAL LIBRARY AT WINDSOR

DEIGN, Sovereign Mistress ! to accept a lay,
No Laureate offering of elaborate art ;
But salutation taking its glad way
From deep recesses of a loyal heart.

Queen, Wife and Mother ! may All-judging Heaven
Shower with a bounteous hand on Thee and Thine
Felicity that only can be given
On earth to goodness blest by grace divine.

Lady ! devoutly honoured and beloved
Through every realm confided to thy sway ; 10
May'st thou pursue thy course by God approved,
And He will teach thy people to obey.

As thou art wont, thy sovereignty adorn
With woman's gentleness, yet firm and staid ;
So shall that earthly crown thy brows have worn
Be changed for one whose glory cannot fade.

And now by duty urged, I lay this Book
Before thy Majesty, in humble trust
That on its simplest pages thou wilt look
With a benign indulgence more than just. 20

Nor wilt thou blame an aged Poet's prayer,
That issuing hence may steal into thy mind

Some solace under weight of royal care,
Or grief—the inheritance of humankind.

For know we not that from celestial spheres,
When Time was young, an inspiration came
(Oh were it mine!) to hallow saddest tears,
And help life onward in its noblest aim.

W. W.

January 9th, 1846

ODE ON THE INSTALLATION OF HIS ROYAL
HIGHNESS PRINCE ALBERT AS CHANCELLOR
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
JULY 6, 1847

FOR thirst of power that Heaven disowns,
For temples, towers, and thrones
Too long insulted by the Spoiler's shock,
Indignant Europe cast
Her stormy foe at last
To reap the whirlwind on a Libyan rock.
War is passion's basest game
Madly played to win a name:
Up starts some tyrant, Earth and Heaven to dare,
The servile million bow ; 10
But will the Lightning glance aside to spare
The Despot's laurelled brow ?

War is mercy, glory, fame,
Waged in Freedom's holy cause,
Freedom, such as man may claim
Under God's restraining laws.
Such is Albion's fame and glory,
Let rescued Europe tell the story.
But lo ! what sudden cloud has darkened all
The land as with a funeral pall ? 20
The Rose of England suffers blight,
The Flower has drooped, the Isle's delight ;
Flower and bud together fall ;
A Nation's hopes lie crushed in Claremont's desolate
Hall.

Time a chequered mantle wears—
Earth awakes from wintry sleep :
Again the Tree a blossom bears ;

Cease, Britannia, cease to weep !
 Hark to the peals on this bright May-morn !
 They tell that your future Queen is born. 30
 A Guardian Angel fluttered
 Above the babe, unseen ;
 One word he softly uttered,
 It named the future Queen ;
 And a joyful cry through the Island rang,
 As clear and bold as the trumpet's clang,
 As bland as the reed of peace :
 ' VICTORIA be her name ! '
 For righteous triumphs are the base
 Whereon Britannia rests her peaceful fame. 40

Time, in his mantle's sunniest fold
 Uplifted in his arms the child,
 And while the fearless infant smiled,
 Her happier destiny foretold :—
 ' Infancy, by Wisdom mild,
 Trained to health and artless beauty ;
 Youth, by pleasure unbeguiled
 From the lore of lofty duty ;
 Womanhood in pure renown,
 Seated on her lineal throne ; 50
 Leaves of myrtle in her Crown,
 Fresh with lustre all their own.
 Love, the treasure worth possessing
 More than all the world beside,
 This shall be her choicest blessing,
 Oft to royal hearts denied.'

That eve, the Star of Brunswick shone
 With steadfast ray benign
 On Gotha's ducal roof, and on
 The softly flowing Leine, 60
 Nor failed to gild the spires of Bonn,
 And glittered on the Rhine.
 Old Camus, too, on that prophetic night
 Was conscious of the ray ;
 And his willows whispered in its light,
 Not to the Zephyr's sway,
 But with a Delphic life, in sight
 Of this auspicious day—
 This day, when Granta hails her chosen Lord,
 And, proud of her award, 70
 Confiding in that Star serene,
 Welcomes the Consort of a happy Queen.

Prince, in these collegiate bowers,
 Where science, leagued with holier truth,
 Guards the sacred heart of youth,
 Solemn monitors are ours.
 These reverend aisles, these hallowed towers,
 Raised by many a hand august,
 Are haunted by majestic Powers,
 The Memories of the Wise and Just, 80
 Who, faithful to a pious trust,
 Here, in the Founder's Spirit sought
 To mould and stamp the ore of thought
 In that bold form and impress high
 That best betoken patriot loyalty.
 Not in vain those Sages taught,—
 True disciples, good as great,
 Have pondered here their country's weal,
 Weighed the Future by the Past,
 Learned how social frames may last, 90
 And how a Land may rule its fate
 By constancy inviolate,
 Though worlds to their foundations reel
 The sport of factious Hate or godless Zeal.

Albert, in thy race we cherish
 A Nation's strength that will not perish
 While England's sceptred Line
 True to the King of Kings is found ;
 Like that Wise ancestor of thine
 Who threw the Saxon shield o'er Luther's life 100
 When first, above the yells of bigot strife,
 The trumpet of the Living Word
 Assumed a voice of deep portentous sound,
 From gladdened Elbe to startled Tiber heard.
 What shield more sublime
 E'er was blazoned or sung ?
 And the PRINCE whom we greet
 From its Hero is sprung.
 Resound, resound the strain
 That hails him for our own ! 110
 Again, again, and yet again,
 For the Church, the State, the Throne !
 And that Presence fair and bright,
 Ever blest wherever seen,
 Who deigns to grace our festal rite,
 The Pride of the Islands, VICTORIA THE QUEEN !

APPENDIX: POEMS OF 1793

AN EVENING WALK

AN EVENING WALK. AN EPISTLE; IN VERSE. ADDRESSED TO A
YOUNG LADY, FROM THE LAKES OF THE NORTH OF ENGLAND.
BY W. WORDSWORTH, B.A., OF ST. JOHN'S, CAMBRIDGE.
LONDON: PRINTED FOR J. JOHNSON, ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD.
1793. 4to.

ARGUMENT

GENERAL Sketch of the Lakes.—Author's Regret of his Youth passed amongst them.—Short description of the Noon.—Cascade Scene.—Noontide Retreat.—Precipice and Sloping Lights.—Face of Nature as the Sun declines.—Mountain Farm, and the Cock.—Slate Quarry.—Sunset.—Superstition of the Country, connected with that Moment.—Swans.—Female Beggar.—Twilight Objects.—Twilight Sounds.—Western Lights.—Spirits.—Night.—Moonlight.—Hope.—Night Sounds.—Conclusion.

FAR from my dearest friend, 'tis mine to rove
Thro' bare grey dell, high wood, and pastoral
cove ;
His wizard course where hoary Derwent takes
Thro' craggs, and forest glooms, and opening lakes,
Staying his silent waves, to hear the roar
That stuns the tremulous cliffs of high Lodore :
Where silver rocks the savage prospect chear
Of giant yews that frown on Rydale's mere ;
Where peace to Grasmere's lonely island leads,
To willowy hedgerows, and to emerald meads ; to
Leads to her bridge, rude church, and cottag'd grounds,
Her rocky sheepwalks, and her woodland bounds ;
Where, bosom'd deep, the shy Winander¹ peeps
'Mid clust'ring isles, and holly-sprinkl'd steeps ;
Where twilight glens endear my Esthwaite's shore,
And memory of departed pleasures, more.
Fair scenes! with other eyes, than once, I gaze
The ever-varying charm your round displays,

¹ These lines are only applicable to the middle part of that lake.

Than when, erewhile, I taught, 'a happy child,'
 The echoes of your rocks my carols wild : 20
 Then did no ebb of chearfulness demand
 Sad tides of joy from Melancholy's hand ;
 In youth's wild eye the livelong day was bright,
 The sun at morning, and the stars of night,
 Alike, when first the vales the bittern fills,
 Or the first woodcocks¹ roam'd the moonlight hills.

Return Delights ! with whom my road begun,
 When Life rear'd laughing up her morning sun ;
 When Transport kiss'd away my april tear,
 ' Rocking as in a dream the tedious year ' ; 30
 When link'd with thoughtless Mirth I cours'd the plain,
 And hope itself was all I knew of pain.
 For then, ev'n then, the little heart would beat
 At times, while young Content forsook her seat,
 And wild Impatience, panting upward, show'd
 Where tipp'd with gold the mountain-summits glow'd.
 Alas ! the idle tale of man is found
 Depicted in the dial's moral round ;
 With Hope Reflexion blends her social rays
 To gild the total tablet of his days ; 40
 Yet still, the sport of some malignant Pow'r,
 He knows but from its shade the present hour.

While, Memory at my side, I wander here,
 Starts at the simplest sight th' unbidden tear,
 A form discover'd at the well-known seat,
 A spot, that angles at the riv'let's feet,
 The ray the cot of morning trav'ling nigh,
 And sail that glides the well-known alders by.
 But why, ungrateful, dwell on idle pain ?
 To shew her yet some joys to me remain, 50
 Say, will my friend, with soft affection's ear,
 The history of a poet's ev'ning hear ?

When, in the south, the wan noon brooding still,
 Breath'd a pale steam around the glaring hill,
 And shades of deep embattl'd clouds were seen
 Spotting the northern cliffs with lights between ;
 Gazing the tempting shades to them deny'd,
 When stood the shorten'd herds amid the tide,

¹ In the beginning of winter, these mountains, in the moonlight nights, are covered with immense quantities of woodcocks ; which, in the dark nights, retire into the woods.

Where, from the barren wall's unshelter'd end,
 Long rails into the shallow lake extend ; 60
 When schoolboys stretch'd their length upon the green
 And round the humming elm, a glimmering scene !
 In the brown park, in flocks, the troubl'd deer
 Shook the still twinkling tail and glancing ear ;
 When horses in the wall-girt intake¹ stood,
 Unshaded, eyeing far below, the flood,
 Crowded behind the swain, in mute distress,
 With forward neck the closing gate to press ;
 And long, with wistful gaze, his walk survey'd
 Till dipp'd his pathway in the river shade ; 70

—Then Quiet led me up the huddling rill,
 Bright'ning with water-breaks the sombrous gill ;²
 To where, while thick above the branches close,
 In dark-brown bason its wild waves repose,
 Inverted shrubs, and moss of darkest green,
 Cling from the rocks, with pale wood-weeds between ;
 Save that, atop, the subtle sunbeams shine,
 On wither'd briars that o'er the craggs recline ;
 Sole light admitted here, a small cascade,
 Illumes with sparkling foam the twilight shade. 80
 Beyond, along the visto of the brook,
 Where antique roots its bustling path o'erlook,
 The eye reposes on a secret bridge³
 Half grey, half shagg'd with ivy to its ridge.

—Sweet rill, farewell ! To-morrow's noon again,
 Shall hide me wooing long thy wildwood strain ;
 But now the sun has gain'd his western road,
 And eve's mild hour invites my steps abroad.

While, near the midway cliff, the silver'd kite
 In many a whistling circle wheels her flight ; 90
 Slant wat'ry lights, from parting clouds, a-pace,
 Travel along the precipice's base ;
 Chearing its naked waste of scatter'd stone
 By lichens grey, and scanty moss o'ergrown,
 Where scarce the foxglove peeps, and thistle's beard,
 And desert stone-chat, all day long, is heard.

¹ The word *intake* is local, and signifies a mountain-inclosure.

² Gill is also, I believe, a term confined to this country. Glen, gill, and dingle, have the same meaning.

³ The reader, who has made the tour of this country, will recognise in this description the features which characterise the lower waterfall in the gardens of Rydale.

How pleasant, as the yellowing sun declines,
 And with long rays and shades the landscape shines ;
 To mark the birches' stems all golden light,
 That lit the dark slant woods with silvery white ! 100
 The willows weeping trees, that twinkling hoar,
 Glanc'd oft upturn'd along the breezy shore,
 Low bending o'er the colour'd water, fold
 Their moveless boughs and leaves like threads of gold ;
 The skiffs with naked masts at anchor laid,
 Before the boat-house peeping thro' the shade ;
 Th' unwearied glance of woodman's echo'd stroke ;
 And curling from the trees the cottage smoke.

Their pannier'd train a groupe of potters goad,
 Winding from side to side up the steep road ; 110
 The peasant from yon cliff of fearful edge
 Shot, down the headlong pathway darts his sledge ;
 Bright beams the lonely mountain horse illume,
 Feeding 'mid purple heath, ' green rings,'¹ and broom ;
 While the sharp slope the slacken'd team confounds,
 Downward² the pond'rous timber-wain resounds ;
 Beside their sheltering cross³ of wall, the flock
 Feeds on in light, nor thinks of winter's shock ;
 In foamy breaks the rill, with merry song,
 Dash'd down the rough rock, lightly leaps along ; 120
 From lonesome chapel at the mountain's feet,
 Three humble bells their rustic chime repeat ;
 Sounds from the water-side the hammer'd boat ;
 And blasted quarry thunders heard remote.

Ev'n here, amid the sweep of endless woods,
 Blue pomp of lakes, high cliffs, and falling floods,
 Not undelightful are the simplest charms
 Found by the verdant door of mountain farms.

Sweetly⁴ ferocious round his native walks,
 Gaz'd by his sister-wives, the monarch stalks ; 130
 Spur clad his nervous feet, and firm his tread,
 A crest of purple tops his warrior head.
 Bright sparks his black and haggard eye-ball hurls
 Afar, his tail he closes and unfurls ;

¹ 'Vivid rings of green.'—Greenwood's Poem on Shooting.

² 'Down the rough slope the pond'rous waggon rings.'—BEATTIE.

³ These rude structures, to protect the flocks, are frequent in this country : the traveller may recollect one in Withburne, another upon Whinlatter.

⁴ 'Dolcemente feroce.'—TASSO.

In this description of the cock, I remembered a spirited one of the same animal in the *l'Agriculture, ou Les Georgiques Françaises* of M. Rossuet.

Whose state, like pine-trees, waving to and fro,
 Droops, and o'er-canopies his regal brow,
 On tiptoe rear'd he blows his clarion throat,
 Threaten'd by faintly answering farms remote.

Bright'ning the cliffs between where sombrous pine,
 And yew-trees o'er the silver rocks recline, 140
 I love to mark the quarry's moving trains,
 Dwarf pannier'd steeds, and men, and numerous wains :
 How busy the enormous hive within,
 While Echo dallies with the various din !
 Some, hardly heard their chissel's clinking sound,
 Toil, small as pigmies, in the gulph profound ;
 Some, dim between th' æreal cliffs descry'd,
 O'erwalk the viewless plank from side to side ;
 These by the pale-blue rocks that ceaseless ring
 Glad from their airy baskets hang and sing. 150

Hung o'er a cloud, above the steep that rears
 It's edge all flame, the broad'ning sun appears ;
 A long blue bar it's ægis orb divides,
 And breaks the spreading of it's golden tides ;
 And now it touches on the purple steep
 That flings his shadow on the pictur'd deep.
 Cross the calm lake's blue shades the cliffs aspire,
 With tow'rs and woods a 'prospect all on fire' ;
 The coves and secret hollows thro' a ray
 Of fainter gold a purple gleam betray ; 160
 The gilded turf arrays in richer green
 Each speck of lawn the broken rocks between ;
 Deep yellow beams the scatter'd boles illume,
 Far in the level forest's central gloom ;
 Waving his hat, the shepherd in the vale
 Directs his winding dog the cliffs to scale,
 That, barking busy 'mid the glittering rocks,
 Hunts, where he points, the intercepted flocks ;
 Where oaks o'erhang the road the radiance shoots
 On tawny earth, wild weeds, and twisted roots ; 170
 The Druid¹ stones their lighted fane unfold,
 And all the babbling brooks are liquid gold ;
 Sunk² to a curve the day-star lessens still,
 Gives one bright glance, and sinks behind the hill.

¹ Not far from Broughton is a Druid monument, of which I do not recollect that any tour descriptive of this country makes mention. Perhaps this poem may fall into the hands of some curious traveller, who may thank me for informing him, that up the Duddon, the river which forms the æstuary at Broughton, may be found some of the most romantic scenery of these mountains.

² From Thomson : see Scott's *Critical Essays*.

In these lone vales, if aught of faith may claim,
Thin silver hairs, and ancient hamlet fame ;
When up the hills, as now, retreats the light,
Strange apparitions mock the village sight.

A desperate form appears, that spurs his steed,
Along the midway cliffs with violent speed ; 180
Unhurt pursues his lengthen'd flight, while all
Attend, at every stretch, his headlong fall.
Anon, in order mounts a gorgeous show
Of horsemen shadows winding to and fro ;
And now the van is gilt with evening's beam,
The rear thro' iron brown betrays a sullen gleam ;
Lost¹ gradual o'er the heights in pomp they go,
While silent stands th' admiring vale below ;
Till, but the lonely beacon all is fled,
That tips with eve's last gleam his spiry head. 190
Now while the solemn evening Shadows sail,
On red slow-waving pinions down the vale,
And, fronting the bright west in stronger lines,
The oak its dark'ning boughs and foliage twines,
I love beside the flowing lake to stray,
Where winds the road along the secret bay ;
By rills that tumble down the woody steep,
And run in transport to the dimpling deeps ;
Along the 'wild meand'ring' shore to view
Obsequious Grace the winding swan pursue. 200
He swells his lifted chest, and backward flings
His bridling neck between his tow'ring wings ;
Stately, and burning in his pride, divides
And glorying looks around, the silent tides :
On as he floats, the silver'd waters glow,
Proud of the varying arch and moveless form of snow.
While tender Cares and mild domestic Loves
With furtive watch pursue her as she moves ;
The female with a meeker charm succeeds,
And her brown little ones around her leads, 210
Nibbling the water lilies as they pass,
Or playing wanton with the floating grass :
She in a mother's care, her beauty's pride
Forgets, unweary'd watching every side,
She calls them near, and with affection sweet
Alternately relieves their weary feet ;
Alternately² they mount her back, and rest
Close by her mantling wings' embraces prest.

¹ See a description of an appearance of this kind in Clark's *Survey of the Lakes*, accompanied with vouchers of its veracity that may amuse the reader.

² This is a fact of which I have been an eye-witness.

Long may ye roam these hermit waves that sleep,
 In birch-besprinkl'd cliffs embosom'd deep ; 220
 These fairy holms untrodden, still, and green,
 Whose shades protect the hidden wave serene ;
 Whence fragrance scents the water's desert gale,
 The violet, and the lily¹ of the vale ;
 Where, tho' her far-off twilight ditty steal,
 They not the trip of harmless milkmaid feel.

Yon tuft conceals your home, your cottage bow'r,
 Fresh water rushes strew the verdant floor ;
 Long grass and willows form the woven wall,
 And swings above the roof the poplar tall. 230
 Thence issuing oft, unwieldy as ye stalk,
 Ye crush with broad black feet your flow'ry walk ;
 Safe from your door ye hear at breezy morn,
 The hound, the horse's tread, and mellow horn ;
 At peace inverted your lithe necks ye lave,
 With the green bottom strewing o'er the wave ;
 No ruder sound your desert haunts invades,
 Than waters dashing wild, or rocking shades.
 Ye ne'er, like hapless human wanderers, throw
 Your young on winter's winding sheet of snow. 240

Fair swan ! by all a mother's joys caress'd,
 Haply some wretch has ey'd, and call'd thee bless'd ;
 Who faint, and beat by summer's breathless ray,
 Hath dragg'd her babes along this weary way ;
 While arrowy fire extorting feverish groans,
 Shot stinging through her stark o'er-labour'd bones.
 —With backward gaze, lock'd joints, and step of pain,
 Her seat scarce left, she strives, alas ! in vain,
 To teach their limbs along the burning road
 A few short steps to totter with their load, 250
 Shakes her numb arm that slumbers with its weight,
 And eyes through tears the mountain's shadeless height ;
 And bids her soldier come her woes to share,
 Asleep on Bunker's charnel hill afar ;
 For hope's deserted well why wistful look ?
 Chok'd is the pathway, and the pitcher broke.

I see her now, deny'd to lay her head,
 On cold blue nights, in hut or straw-built shed ;
 Turn to a silent smile their sleepy cry,
 By pointing to a shooting star on high : 260

¹ The lily of the valley is found in great abundance in the smaller islands of Winandermere.

I hear, while in the forest depth he sees,
 The Moon's fix'd gaze between the opening trees,
 In broken sounds her elder grief demand,
 And skyward lift, like one that prays, his hand,
 If, in that country, where he dwells afar,
 His father views that good, that kindly star;
 —Ah me! all light is mute amid the gloom,
 The interlunar eavern of the tomb.
 —When low-hung clouds each star of summer hide,
 And fireless are the valleys far and wide, 270
 Where the brook brawls along the painful road,
 Dark with bat-haunted ashes stretching broad,
 The distant clock forgot, and chilling dew,
 Pleas'd thro' the dusk their breaking smiles to view,
 Oft has she taught them on her lap to play
 Delighted, with the glow-worm's harmless ray
 Toss'd light from hand to hand; while on the
 ground
 Small circles of green radiance gleam around.

Oh! when the bitter showers her path assail,
 And roars between the hills the torrent gale, 280
 —No more her breath can thaw their fingers cold,
 Their frozen arms her neck no more can fold;
 Scarce heard, their chattering lips her shoulder chill,
 And her cold back their colder bosoms thrill;
 All blind she wilders o'er the lightless heath,
 Led by Fear's cold wet hand, and dogg'd by Death;
 Death, as she turns her neck the kiss to seek,
 Breaks off the dreadful kiss with angry shriek.
 Snatch'd from her shoulder with despairing moan,
 She clasps them at that dim-seen roofless stone. — 290
 'Now ruthless Tempest launch thy deadliest dart!
 Fall fires—but let us perish heart to heart.'
 Weak roof a cowering form two babes to shield,
 And faint the fire a dying heart can yield;
 Press the sad kiss, fond mother! vainly fears
 Thy flooded cheek to wet them with its tears;
 Soon shall the Light'ning hold before thy head
 His torch, and shew them slumbering in their bed,
 No tears can chill them, and no bosom warms,
 Thy breast their death-bed, coffin'd in thine arms. 300

Sweet are the sounds that mingle from afar,
 Heard by calm lakes, as peeps the folding star,
 Where the duck dabbles 'mid the rustling sedge,
 And feeding pike starts from the water's edge,

Or the swan stirs the reeds, his neck and bill
 Wetting, that drip upon the water still;
 And heron, as resounds the trodden shore,
 Shoots upward, darting his long neck before.
 While, by the scene compos'd, the breast subsides,
 Nought wakens or disturbs it's tranquil tides; 310
 Nought but the char that for the may-fly leaps,
 And breaks the mirror of the circling deeps;
 Or clock, that blind against the wanderer born,
 Drops at his feet, and stills his droning horn.
 —The whistling swain that plods his ringing way
 Where the slow waggon winds along the bay;
 The sugh¹ of swallow flocks that twittering sweep,
 The solemn curfew swinging long and deep;
 The talking boat that moves with pensive sound,
 Or drops his anchor down with plunge profound; 320
 Of boys that bathe remote the faint uproar,
 And restless piper wearying out the shore;
 These all to swell the village murmurs blend,
 That soften'd from the water-head descend.
 While in sweet cadence rising small and still
 The far-off minstrels of the haunted hill,
 As the last bleating of the fold expires,
 Tune in the mountain dells their water lyres.

Now with religious awe the farewell light
 Blends with the solemn colouring of the night; 330
 'Mid groves of clouds that crest the mountain's brow,
 And round the West's proud lodge their shadows throw,
 Like Una² shining on her gloomy way,
 The half seen form of Twilight roams astray;
 Thence, from three paly loopholes mild and small,
 Slow lights upon the lake's still bosom fall,
 Beyond the mountain's giant reach that hides
 In deep determin'd gloom his subject tides.
 —'Mid the dark steep's repose the shadowy streams,
 As touch'd with dawning moonlight's hoary gleams, 340
 Long streaks of fairy light the wave illumine
 With bordering lines of intervening gloom,
 Soft o'er the surface creep the lustres pale
 Tracking with silvering path the changeful gale.

¹ 'Sugh,' a Scotch word, expressive, as Mr. Gilpin explains it, of the sound of the motion of a stick through the air, or of the wind passing through the trees. See Burns' *Cotter's Saturday Night*.

² Alluding to this passage of Spenser—

'Her angel face
 As the great eye of Heaven shined bright,
 And made a sunshine in that shady place.'

—'Tis restless magic all ; at once the bright
 Breaks on the shade, the shade upon the light,
 Fair Spirits are abroad ; in sportive chase
 Brushing with lucid wands the water's face,
 While music stealing round the glimmering deeps
 Charms the tall circle of th' enchanted steeps. 350

—As thro' th' astonish'd woods the notes ascend,
 The mountain streams their rising song suspend ;
 Below Eve's listening Star the sheep walk stills
 It's drowsy tinklings on th' attentive hills ;
 The milkmaid stops her ballad, and her pail
 Stays it's low murmur in th' unbreathing vale ;
 No night-duck clamours for his wilder'd mate,
 Aw'd, while below the Genii hold their state.

—The pomp is fled, and mute the wondrous strains,
 No wrack of all the pageant scene remains, 360
 So vanish¹ those fair Shadows, human joys,
 But Death alone their vain regret destroys.
 Unheeded Night has overcome the vales,
 On the dark earth the baffl'd vision fails,
 If peep between the clouds a star on high,
 There turns for glad repose the weary eye ;
 The latest lingerer of the forest train,
 The lone black fir, forsakes the faded plain ;
 Last evening sight, the cottage smoke no more,
 Lost in the deepen'd darkness, glimmers hoar ; 370
 High towering from the sullen dark-brown mere,
 Like a black wall, the mountain steep appears,
 Thence red from different heights with restless gleam
 Small cottage lights across the water stream,
 Nought else of man or life remains behind
 To call from other worlds the wilder'd mind,
 Till pours the wakeful bird her solemn strains
 Heard by² the night-calm of the wat'ry plains.

—No purple prospects now the mind employ
 Glowing in golden sunset tints of joy, 380
 But o'er the sooth'd accordant heart we feel
 A sympathetic twilight slowly steal,
 And ever, as we fondly muse, we find
 The soft gloom deep'ning on the tranquil mind.
 Stay ! pensive, sadly-pleasing visions, stay !
 Ah no ! as fades the vale, they fade away.
 Yet still the tender, vacant gloom remains,
 Still the cold cheek its shuddering tear retains.

¹ 'So break those glittering shadows, human joys.'—YOUNG.

² 'Charming the night-calm with her powerful song.' A line of one of our older poets.

The bird, with fading light who ceas'd to thread
 Silent the hedge or steaming rivulet's bed, 390
 From his grey re-appearing tower shall soon
 Salute with boding note the rising moon,
 Frosting with hoary light the pearly ground,
 And pouring deeper blue to Æther's bound ;
 Rejoic'd her solemn pomp of clouds to fold
 In robes of azure, fleecy white, and gold,
 While rose and poppy, as the glow-worm fades,
 Checquer with paler red the thicket shades.

Now o'er the eastern hill, where Darkness broods
 O'er all its vanish'd dells, and lawns, and woods 400
 Where but a mass of shade the sight can trace,
 She lifts in silence up her lovely face ;
 Above the gloomy valley flings her light,
 Far to the western slopes with hamlets white ;
 And gives, where woods the checquer'd upland strew,
 To the green corn of summer autumn's hue.

Thus Hope, first pouring from her blessed horn
 Her dawn, far lovelier than the Moon's own morn ;
 'Till higher mounted, strives in vain to chear
 The weary hills, impervious, black'ning near ; 410
 —Yet does she still, undaunted, throw the while
 On darling spots remote her tempting smile.
 —Ev'n now she decks for me a distant scene,
 (For dark and broad the gulph of time between)
 Gilding that cottage with her fondest ray,
 (Sole bourn, sole wish, sole object of my way ;
 How fair it's lawn and silvery woods appear !
 How sweet it's streamlet murmurs in mine ear !)
 Where we, my friend, to golden days shall rise,
 'Till our small share of hardly-paining sighs 420
 (For sighs will ever trouble human breath)
 Creep hush'd into the tranquil breast of Death.

But now the clear-bright Moon her zenith gains,
 And rimy without speck extend the plains ;
 The deepest dell the mountain's breast displays,
 Scarce hides a shadow from her searching rays ;
 From the dark-blue 'faint silvery threads' divide
 The hills, while gleams below the azure tide ;
 The scene is waken'd, yet it's peace unbroke,
 By silver'd wreaths of quiet charcoal smoke, 430
 That, o'er the ruins of the fallen wood,
 Steal down the hills, and spread along the flood.
 The song of mountain streams unheard by day,
 Now hardly heard, beguiles my homeward way.
 All air is, as the sleeping water, still,

List'ning th' æreal music of the hill,
Broke only by the slow clock tolling deep,
Or shout that wakes the ferry-man from sleep,
Soon follow'd by his hollow-parting oar,
And echo'd hoof approaching the far shore ;
Sound of clos'd gate, across the water borne,
Hurrying the feeding hare thro' rustling corn ;
The tremulous sob of the complaining owl ;
And at long intervals the mill-dog's howl ;
The distant forge's swinging thump profound ;
Or yell in the deep woods of lonely hound.

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DESCRIPTIVE SKETCHES

DESCRIPTIVE SKETCHES. IN VERSE. TAKEN DURING A PEDESTRIAN TOUR IN THE ITALIAN, GRISON, SWISS, AND SAVOYARD ALPS. BY W. WORDSWORTH, B.A., OF ST. JOHN'S, CAMBRIDGE. 'LOCA PASTORUM DESERTA ATQUE OTIA DIA.'—*Lucret.* 'CASTELLA IN TUMULIS—ET LONGE SALTUS LATEQUE VACANTES.'—*Virgil.* LONDON: PRINTED FOR J. JOHNSON, ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD. 1793. 4to.

TO THE REV. ROBERT JONES
FELLOW OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

DEAR SIR,—However desirous I might have been of giving you proofs of the high place you hold in my esteem, I should have been cautious of wounding your delicacy by thus publicly addressing you, had not the circumstance of my having accompanied you amongst the Alps, seemed to give this dedication a propriety sufficient to do away any scruples which your modesty might otherwise have suggested.

In inscribing this little work to you, I consult my heart. You know well how great is the difference between two companions lolling in a post-chaise, and two travellers plodding slowly along the road, side by side, each with his little knapsack of necessities upon his shoulders. How much more of heart between the two latter!

I am happy in being conscious I shall have one reader who will approach the conclusion of these few pages with regret. You they must certainly interest, in reminding you of moments to which you can hardly look back without a pleasure not the less dear from a shade of melancholy. You will meet with few images without recollecting the spot where we observed them together, consequently, whatever is feeble in my design, or spiritless in my colouring, will be amply supplied by your own memory.

With still greater propriety I might have inscribed to you a description of some of the features of your native mountains, through which we have wandered together, in the same manner, with so much pleasure. But the sea-sunsets which give such splendour to the vale of Clwyd, Snowdon, the chair of Idris, the quiet village of Bethkelert, Menai and her druids, the Alpine

steeps of the Conway, and the still more interesting windings of the wizard stream of the Dee remain yet untouched. Apprehensive that my pencil may never be exercised on these subjects, I cannot let slip this opportunity of thus publicly assuring you with how much affection and esteem, I am, Dear Sir, Your most obedient very humble servant,

W. WORDSWORTH.

ARGUMENT

HAPPINESS (if she had been to be found on Earth) amongst the Charms of Nature.—Pleasures of the pedestrian Traveller.—Author crosses France to the Alps.—Present state of the Grande Chartreuse.—Lake of Como.—Time, Sunset.—Same Scene, Twilight.—Same Scene, Morning, it's Voluptuous Character; Old Man and Forest Cottage Music.—River Tusa.—Via Mala and Grison Gypsy.—Valley of Schellenenthal.—Lake of Uri.—Stormy Sunset.—Chapel of William Tell.—Force of Local Emotion.—Chamois Chaser.—View of the higher Alps.—Manner of Life of a Swiss Mountaineer interspersed with Views of the higher Alps.—Golden Age of the Alps.—Life and Views continued.—Ranz des Vaches, famous Swiss Air.—Abbey of Einsiedlen and it's Pilgrims.—Valley of Chamouny.—Mont Blanc.—Slavery of Savoy.—Influence of Liberty on Cottage Happiness.—France.—Wish for the Extirpation of Slavery.—Conclusion.

WERE there, below, a spot of holy ground,
 By Pain and her sad family unfound,
 Sure, Nature's GOD that spot to man had giv'n,
 Where murmuring rivers join the song of ev'n;
 Where falls the purple morning far and wide
 In flakes of light upon the mountain-side;
 Where summer Suns in ocean sink to rest,
 Or moonlight Upland lifts her hoary breast;
 Where Silence, on her wing of night, o'erbroods
 Unfathom'd dells and undiscover'd woods;
 Where rocks and groves the power of water shakes
 In cataracts, or sleeps in quiet lakes.
 But doubly pitying Nature loves to show'r
 Soft on his wounded heart her healing pow'r,
 Who plods o'er hills and vales his road forlorn,
 Wooing her varying charms from eve to morn.
 No sad vacuities his heart annoy,
 Blows not a Zephyr but it whispers joy;
 For him lost flowers their idle sweets exhale;
 He tastes the meanest note that swells the gale;
 For him sod-seats the cottage-door adorn,
 And peeps the far-off spire, his evening bourn!
 Dear is the forest frowning o'er his head,
 And dear the green-sward to his velvet tread;
 Moves there a cloud o'er mid-day's flaming eye?
 Upward he looks—and calls it luxury;

Kind Nature's charities his steps attend,
 In every babbling brook he finds a friend,
 While chaste¹ning thoughts of sweetest use, bestow'd
 By Wisdom, moralize his pensive road. 30
 Host of his welcome inn, the noon-tide bow'r,
 To his spare meal he calls the passing poor;
 He views the Sun uprear his golden fire,
 Or sink, with heart alive like Memnon's ¹ lyre;
 Blesses the Moon that comes with kindest ray
 To light him shaken by his viewless way.
 With bashful fear no cottage children steal
 From him, a brother at the cottage meal,
 His humble looks no shy restraint impart, 40
 Around him plays at will the virgin heart.
 While unsuspended wheels the village dance,
 The maidens eye him with inquiring glance,
 Much wondering what sad stroke of crazing Care
 Or desperate Love could lead a wanderer there.

Me, lur'd by hope her sorrows to remove,
 A heart, that could not much itself approve,
 O'er Gallia's wastes of corn dejected led,
 Her ²road elms rustling thin above my head,
 Or through her truant pathway's native charms, 50
 By secret villages and lonely farms,
 To where the Alps, ascending white in air,
 Toy with the Sun, and glitter from afar.

Ev'n now I sigh at hoary Chartreuse' doom
 Weeping beneath his chill of mountain gloom.
 Where now is fled that Power whose frown severe
 Tam'd 'sober Reason' till she crouch'd in fear?
 That breath'd a death-like peace these woods around, }
 Broke only by th' unvaried torrent's sound,
 Or prayer-bell by the dull cicada drown'd. } 60
 The cloister startles at the gleam of arms,
 And Blasphemy the shuddering fane alarms;
 Nod the cloud-piercing pines their troubl'd heads,
 Spires, rocks, and lawns, a browner night o'erspreads.
 Strong terror checks the female peasant's sighs,
 And start th' astonish'd shades at female eyes.
 The thundering tube the aged angler hears,
 And swells the groaning torrent with his tears.
 From Bruno's forest screams the frightened jay,
 And slow th' insulted eagle wheels away.

¹ The lyre of Memnon is reported to have emitted melancholy or cheerful tones, as it was touched by the sun's evening or morning rays.

² There are few people whom it may be necessary to inform, that the sides of many of the post-roads in France are planted with a row of trees.

The cross with hideous laughter Demons mock, 70
 By angels ¹ planted on the æreal rock.
 The 'parting Genius' sighs with hollow breath
 Along the mystic streams of Life and Death,²
 Swelling the outcry dull, that long resounds
 Portentous, thro' her old woods' trackless bounds,
 Deepening her echoing torrents' awful peal
 And bidding paler shades her form conceal,
 Vallombre,³ 'mid her falling fanes, deplores,
 For ever broke, the sabbath of her bow'rs.

More pleas'd, my foot the hidden margin roves 80
 Of Como bosom'd deep in chestnut groves.
 No meadows thrown between, the giddy steeps
 Tower, bare or silvan, from the narrow deeps.
 To towns, whose shades of no rude sound complain,
 To ringing team unknown and grating wain,
 To flat-roof'd towns, that touch the water's bound,
 Or lurk in woody sunless glens profound,
 Or from the bending rocks obtrusive cling,
 And o'er the whiten'd wave their shadows fling ;
 Wild round the steeps the little ⁴ pathway twines, 90
 And Silence loves it's purple roof of vines.

The viewless lingerer hence, at evening, sees
 From rock-hewn steps the sail between the trees ;
 Or marks, mid opening cliffs, fair dark-ey'd maids
 Tend the small harvest of their garden glades,
 Or, led by distant warbling notes, surveys,
 With hollow ringing ears and darkening gaze,
 Binding the charmed soul in powerless trance,
 Lip-dewing Song and ringlet-tossing Dance,
 Where sparkling eyes and breaking smiles illumine 100
 The bosom'd cabin's lyre-enliven'd gloom ;
 Or stops the solemn mountain-shades to view
 Stretch, o'er their pictur'd mirror, broad and blue,
 Tracking the yellow sun from steep to steep,
 As up th' opposing hills, with tortoise foot, they creep.
 Here half a village shines, in gold array'd,
 Bright as the moon, half hides itself in shade.
 From the dark sylvan roofs the restless spire,
 Inconstant glancing, mounts like springing fire,

¹ Alluding to crosses seen on the tops of the spiry rocks of the Chartreuse, which have every appearance of being inaccessible.

² Names of rivers at the Chartreuse.

³ Name of one of the vallies of the Chartreuse.

⁴ If any of my readers should ever visit the Lake of Como, I recommend it to him to take a stroll along this charming little pathway ; he must chuse the evening, as it is on the western side of the Lake. We pursued it from the foot of the water to its head : it is once interrupted by a ferry.

There, all unshaded, blazing forests throw 110
 Rich golden verdure on the waves below.
 Slow glides the sail along th' illumined shore,
 And steals into the shade the lazy oar.
 Soft bosoms breathe around contagious sighs,
 And amorous music on the water dies.
 Heedless how Pliny, musing here, survey'd
 Old Roman boats and figures thro' the shade,
 Pale Passion, overpower'd, retires and woos
 The thicket, where th' unlisten'd stock-dove coos.

How bless'd, delicious Scene! the eye that greets
 Thy open beauties, or thy lone retreats; 121
 Th' unwearied sweep of wood thy cliffs that scales,
 The never-ending waters of thy vales;
 The cots, those dim religious groves embow'r,
 Or, under rocks that from the water tow'r
 Insinuated, sprinkling all the shore,
 Each with his household boat beside the door,
 Whose flaccid sails in forms fantastic droop,
 Bright'ning the gloom where thick the forests stoop;
 —Thy torrents shooting from the clear-blue sky, 130
 Thy towns, like swallows' nests that cleave on high;
 That glimmer hoar in eve's last light, descry'd
 Dim from the twilight water's shaggy side,
 Whence lutes and voices down th' enchanted woods
 Steal, and compose the oar-forgotten floods,
 While Evening's solemn bird melodious weeps,
 Heard, by star-spotted bays, beneath the steepes;
 —Thy lake, mid smoking woods, that blue and grey
 Gleams, streak'd or dappled, hid from morning's ray
 Slow-travelling down the western hills, to fold 140
 It's green-ting'd margin in a blaze of gold;
 From thickly-glittering spires the matin-bell
 Calling the woodman from his desert cell,
 A summons to the sound of oars, that pass,
 Spotting the steaming deeps, to early mass;
 Slow swells the service o'er the water born,
 While fill each pause the ringing woods of morn.

Farewel! those forms that, in thy noon-tide
 shade,

Rest, near their little plots of wheaten glade;
 Those steadfast eyes, that beating breasts inspire 150
 To throw the 'sultry ray' of young Desire;
 Those lips, whose tides of fragrance come, and go,
 Accordant to the cheek's unquiet glow;
 Those shadowy breasts in love's soft light array'd,
 And rising, by the moon of passion sway'd.

—Thy fragrant gales and lute-resounding streams,
 Breathe o'er the failing soul voluptuous dreams;
 While Slavery, forcing the sunk mind to dwell
 On joys that might disgrace the captive's cell,
 Her shameless timbrel shakes along thy marge, 160
 And winds between thine isles the vocal barge.

Yet, arts are thine that rock th' unsleeping heart,
 And smiles to Solitude and Want impart.
 I lov'd, mid thy most desert woods astray,
 With pensive step to measure my slow way,¹
 By lonely, silent cottage-doors to roam,
 The far-off peasant's day-deserted home;
 Once did I pierce to where a cabin stood,
 The redbreast peace had bury'd it in wood,
 There, by the door a hoary-headed sire 170
 Touch'd with his wither'd hand an aged lyre;
 Beneath an old-grey oak as violets lie,
 Stretch'd at his feet with steadfast, upward eye,
 His children's children join'd the holy sound,
 A hermit—with his family around.

Hence shall we seek where fair Locarno smiles
 Embower'd in walnut slopes and citron isles,
 Or charms that smile on Tusa's evening stream,
 While mid dim towers and woods her ² waters gleam:
 From the bright wave, in solemn gloom, retire 180
 The dull-red steep, and darkening still, aspire,
 To where afar rich orange lustres glow
 Round undistinguish'd clouds, and rocks, and snow;
 Or, led where Viamala's chasms confine
 Th' indignant waters of the infant Rhine,
 Bend o'er th' abyss?—the else impervious gloom
 His burning eyes with fearful light illumine.
 The Grison gypsey here her tent has plac'd,
 Sole human tenant of the piny waste;
 Her tawny skin, dark eyes, and glossy locks, 190
 Bend o'er the smoke that curls beneath the rocks.

—The mind condemn'd, without reprieve, to go
 O'er life's long deserts with it's charge of woe,
 With sad congratulation joins the train,
 Where beasts and men together o'er the plain }
 Move on,—a mighty caravan of pain;

¹ 'Solo, e pensoso i più deserti campi
 Vò misurando à passi tardí, e lenti.'—PETRARCH.

² The river along whose banks you descend in crossing the Alps by the Semplon pass. From the striking contrast of it's features, this pass I should imagine to be the most interesting among the Alps.

Hope, strength, and courage, social suffering brings,
 Freshening the waste of sand with shades and springs.
 —She solitary through the desert drear
 Spontaneous wanders, hand in hand with Fear. 200
 A giant moan along the forest swells
 Protracted, and the twilight storm foretells,
 And, ruining from the cliffs their deafening load
 Tumbles, the wildering Thunder slips abroad ;
 On the high summits Darkness comes and goes,
 Hiding their fiery clouds, their rocks, and snows ;
 The torrent, travers'd by the lustre broad,
 Starts like a horse beside the flashing road ;
 In the roof'd ¹ bridge, at that despairing hour,
 She seeks a shelter from the battering show'r. 210
 —Fierce comes the river down ; the crashing wood
 Gives way, and half it's pines torment the flood ;
 Fearful,² beneath, the Water-spirits call,
 And the bridge vibrates, tottering to its fall.
 —Heavy, and dull, and cloudy is the night,
 No star supplies the comfort of it's light,
 Glimmer the dim-lit Alps, dilated, round,
 And one sole light shifts in the vale profound ;
 While, opposite, the waning moon hangs still,
 And red, above her melancholy hill. 220
 By the deep quiet gloom appall'd, she sighs,
 Stoops her sick head, and shuts her weary eyes.
 —Breaking th' ascending roar of desert floods,
 And insect buzz, that stuns the sultry woods,
 She hears, upon the mountain forest's brow,
 The death-dog, howling loud and long, below ;
 On viewless fingers counts the valley-clock,
 Followed by drowsy crow of midnight cock.
 —Bursts from the troubl'd Larch's giant boughs
 The pie, and chattering breaks the night's repose. 230
 Low barks the fox : by Havoc rous'd the bear,
 Quits, growling, the white bones that strew his lair ;
 The dry leaves stir as with the serpent's walk,
 And, far beneath, Banditti voices talk ;
 Behind her hill the Moon, all crimson, rides,
 And his red eyes the slinking water hides ;
 Then all is hushed ; the bushes rustle near,
 And with strange tinglings sings her fainting ear.

¹ Most of the bridges among the Alps are of wood and covered : these bridges have a heavy appearance, and rather injure the effect of the scenery in some places.

² 'Red came the river down, and loud, and oft
 The angry Spirit of the water shriek'd.'—HOME'S *Douglas*.

—Vex'd by the darkness, from the piny gulf
 Ascending, nearer howls the famish'd wolf, 240
 While thro' the stillness scatters wild dismay,
 Her babe's small cry, that leads him to his prey.

Now, passing Urseren's open vale serene,
 Her quiet streams, and hills of downy green,
 Plunge with the Russ embrown'd by Terror's breath,
 Where danger roofs the narrow walks of death ;
 By floods, that, thundering from their dizzy height,
 Swell more gigantic on the steadfast sight ;
 Black drizzling craggs, that beaten by the din,
 Vibrate, as if a voice complain'd within ; 250
 Bare steeps, where Desolation stalks, afraid,
 Unsteadfast, by a blasted yew upstay'd ;
 By cells¹ whose image, trembling as he prays,
 Awe struck, the kneeling peasant scarce surveys ;
 Loose-hanging rocks the Day's bless'd eye that
 hide,

And crosses² rear'd to Death on every side,
 Which with cold kiss Devotion planted near,
 And, bending, water'd with the human tear,
 Soon fading 'silent' from her upward eye,
 Unmov'd with each rude form of Danger nigh, 260
 Fix'd on the anchor left by him who saves
 Alike in whelming snows and roaring waves.

On as we move, a softer prospect opes,
 Calm huts, and lawns between, and sylvan slopes.
 While mists, suspended on th' expiring gale,
 Moveless o'er-hang the deep secluded vale,
 The beams of evening, slipping soft between,
 Light up of tranquil joy a sober scene ;
 Winding it's dark-green wood and emerald glade,
 The still vale lengthens underneath the shade ; 270
 While in soft gloom the scattering bowers recede,
 Green dewy lights adorn the freshen'd mead,
 Where solitary forms illumin'd stray,
 Turning with quiet touch the valley's hay,
 On the low³ brown wood-huts delighted sleep
 Along the brighten'd gloom reposing deep.
 While pastoral pipes and streams the landscape lull,
 And bells of passing mules that tinkle dull,

¹ The Catholic religion prevails here. These cells are, as is well known, very common in the Catholic countries, planted, like Roman tombs, along the road side.

² Crosses commemorative of the deaths of travellers by the fall of snow, and other accidents very common along this dreadful road.

³ The houses in the more retired Swiss valleys are all built of wood.

In solemn shapes before th' admiring eye
 Dilated hang the misty pines on high, 280
 Huge convent domes with pinnacles and tow'rs,
 And antique castles seen thro' drizzling show'rs.

From such romantic dreams my soul awake,
 Lo! Fear looks silent down on Uri's lake,
 By whose unpathway'd margin still and dread
 Was never heard the plodding peasant's tread.
 Tower like a wall the naked rocks, or reach
 Far o'er the secret water dark with beech,
 More high, to where creation seems to end,
 Shade above shade the desert pines ascend, 290

And still, below, where mid the savage scene
 Peeps out a little speck of smiling green,
 There with his infants man undaunted creeps
 And hangs his small wood-hut upon the steeps.
 A garden-plot the desert air perfumes,
 'Mid the dark pines a little orchard blooms,
 A zig-zag path from the domestic skiff
 Threading the painful cragg surmounts the cliff.
 —Before those hermit doors, that never know
 The face of traveller passing to and fro, 300

No peasant leans upon his pole, to tell
 For whom at morning toll'd the funeral bell,
 Their watch-dog ne'er his angry bark forgoes,
 Touch'd by the beggar's moan of human woes,
 The grassy seat beneath their casement shade
 The pilgrim's wistful eye hath never stay'd.
 —There, did the iron Genius not disdain
 The gentle Power that haunts the myrtle plain,
 There might the love-sick maiden sit, and chide
 Th' insuperable rocks and severing tide, 310

There watch at eve her lover's sun-gilt sail
 Approaching, and upbraid the tardy gale,
 There list at midnight till is heard no more,
 Below, the echo of his parting oar,
 There hang in fear, when growls the frozen
 stream,

To guide his dangerous tread the taper's gleam.

'Mid stormy vapours ever driving by,
 Where ospreys, cormorants, and herons cry,
 Where hardly giv'n the hopeless waste to chear
 Deny'd the bread of life the foodful ear, 320
 Dwindles the pear on autumn's latest spray,
 And apple sickens pale in summer's ray,
 Ev'n here Content has fix'd her smiling reign
 With Independence child of high Disdain.

Exulting mid the winter of the skies,
 Shy as the jealous chamois, Freedom flies, }
 And often grasps her sword, and often eyes, }
 Her crest a bough of Winter's bleakest pine,
 Strange 'weeds' and alpine plants her helm
 entwine,

And wildly-pausing oft she hangs aghast, 330
 While thrills the 'Spartan life' between the blast.

'Tis storm; and hid in mist from hour to hour
 All day the floods a deeper murmur pour,
 And mournful sounds, as of a Spirit lost,
 Pipe wild along the hollow-blustering coast,
 'Till the Sun walking on his western field
 Shakes from behind the clouds his flashing shield.

Triumphant on the bosom of the storm,
 Glances the fire-clad eagle's wheeling form;
 Eastward, in long perspective glittering, shine 340
 The wood-crown'd cliffs that o'er the lake recline;
 Wide o'er the Alps a hundred streams unfold,
 At once to pillars turn'd that flame with gold;
 Behind his sail the peasant tries to shun
 The west that burns like one dilated sun,
 Where in a mighty crucible expire

The mountains, glowing hot, like coals of fire.¹

But lo! the boatman, over-aw'd, before
 The pictur'd fane of Tell suspends his oar;
 Confused the Marathonian tale appears, 350
 While burn in his full eyes the glorious tears.
 And who but feels a power of strong controul,
 Felt only there, oppress his labouring soul,
 Who walks, where honour'd men of ancient days
 Have wrought with god-like arm the deeds of
 praise?

Say, who, by thinking on Canadian hills,
 Or wild Aosta lull'd by Alpine rills,
 On Zutphen's plain; or where with soften'd gaze
 The old grey stones the plaided chief surveys,

¹ I had once given to these sketches the title of Picturesque; but the Alps are insulted in applying to them that term. Whoever, in attempting to describe their sublime features, should confine himself to the cold rules of painting would give his reader but a very imperfect idea of those emotions which they have the irresistible power of communicating to the most impassive imaginations. The fact is, that controuling influence, which distinguishes the Alps from all other scenery, is derived from images which disdain the pencil. Had I wished to make a picture of this scene I had thrown much less light into it. But I consulted nature and my feelings. The ideas excited by the stormy sunset I am here describing owed their sublimity to that deluge of light, or rather of fire, in which nature had wrapped the immense forms around me; any intrusion of shade, by destroying the unity of the impression, had necessarily diminished its grandeur.

Can guess the high resolve, the cherish'd pain 360
 Of him whom passion rivets to the plain,
 Where breath'd the gale that caught Wolfe's happiest
 sigh,

And the last sun-beam fell on Bayard's eye,
 Where bleeding Sydney from the cup retir'd,
 And glad Dundee in 'faint huzza's' expir'd.

But now with other soul I stand alone
 Sublime upon this far-surveying cone,
 And watch from pike¹ to pike amid the sky
 Small as a bird the chamois-chaser fly.

'Tis his with fearless step at large to roam 370

Thro' wastes, of Spirits wing'd the solemn home,
 Thro'² vacant worlds where Nature never gave
 A brook to murmur or a bough to wave,
 Which unsubstantial Phantoms sacred keep;
 Thro' worlds where Life and Sound, and Motion sleep,
 Where Silence still her death-like reign extends,
 Save when the startling cliff unfrequent rends:

In the deep snow the mighty ruin drown'd,
 Mocks the dull ear of Time with deaf abortive sound;
 —To mark a planet's pomp and steady light 380

In the least star of scarce-appearing night,
 And neighbouring moon, that coasts the vast
 profound,

Wheel pale and silent her diminish'd round,
 While far and wide the icy summits blaze
 Rejoicing in the glory of her rays;
 The star of noon that glitters small and bright,
 Shorn of his beams, insufferably white,
 And flying fleet behind his orb to view
 Th' interminable sea of sable blue.

—Of cloudless suns no more ye frost-built spires 390
 Refract in rainbow hues the restless fires!

Ye dewy mists the arid rocks o'er-spread
 Whose slippery face derides his deathful tread!

—To wet the peak's impracticable sides
 He opens of his feet the sanguine tides,

Weak and more weak the issuing current eyes
 Lapp'd by the panting tongue of thirsty skies.³

¹ Pike is a word very commonly used in the north of England, to signify a high mountain of the conic form, as Langdale pike, etc.

² For most of the images in the next sixteen verses I am indebted to M. Raymond's interesting observations annexed to his translation of Coxe's *Tour in Switzerland*.

³ The rays of the sun drying the rocks frequently produce on their surface a dust so subtile and slippery, that the wretched chamois-chasers are obliged to bleed themselves in the legs and feet in order to secure a footing.

—At once bewildering mists around him close,
 And cold and hunger are his least of woes ;
 The Demon of the snow with angry roar 400
 Descending, shuts for aye his prison door.
 Craz'd by the strength of hope at morn he eyes
 As sent from heav'n the raven of the skies,
 Then with despair's whole weight his spirits sink,
 No bread to feed him, and the snow his drink,
 While ere his eyes can close upon the day,
 The eagle of the Alps o'ershades his prey.
 —Meanwhile his wife and child with cruel hope
 All night the door at every moment ope ;
 Haply that child in fearful doubt may gaze, 410
 Passing his father's bones in future days,
 Start at the reliques of that very thigh,
 On which so oft he prattled when a boy.

Hence shall we turn where, heard with fear afar,
 Thunders thro' echoing pines the headlong Aar ?
 Or rather stay to taste the mild delights
 Of pensive Underwalden's¹ pastoral heights ?
 —Is there who mid these awful wilds has seen
 The native Genii walk the mountain green ?
 Or heard, while other worlds their charms reveal, 420
 Soft music from th' aëreal summit steal ?
 While o'er the desert, answering every close,
 Rich steam of sweetest perfume comes and goes.
 —And sure there is a secret Power that reigns
 Here, where no trace of man the spot profanes,
 Nought but the herds that pasturing upward creep,
 Hung dim-discover'd from the dangerous steep,
 Or summer hamlet,² flat and bare, on high
 Suspended, mid the quiet of the sky.
 How still ! no irreligious sound or sight 430
 Rouzes the soul from her severe delight.
 An idle voice the sabbath region fills
 Of Deep that calls to Deep across the hills,
 Broke only by the melancholy sound
 Of drowsy bells for ever tinkling round ;
 Faint wail of eagle melting into blue
 Beneath the cliffs, and pine-woods steady sugh ;³
 The solitary heifer's deepen'd low ;
 Or rumbling heard remote of falling snow.

¹ The people of this Canton are supposed to be of a more melancholy disposition than the other inhabitants of the Alps: this, if true, may proceed from their living more secluded.

² These summer hamlets are most probably (as I have seen observed by a critic in the *Gentleman's Magazine*) what Virgil alludes to in the expression 'Castella in tumulis.'

³ Sugh, a Scotch word expressive of the sound of the wind through the trees.

Save that, the stranger seen below, the boy 440
Shouts from the echoing hills with savage joy.

When warm from myrtle bays and tranquil seas,
Comes on, to whisper hope, the vernal breeze,¹
When hums the mountain bee in May's glad ear,
And emerald isles to spot the heights appear,
When shouts and lowing herds the valley fill,
And louder torrents stun the noon-tide hill,
When fragrant scents beneath th' enchanted tread
Spring up, his little all around him spread,
The pastoral Swiss begins the cliffs to scale, 450
To silence leaving the deserted vale,
Up the green mountain tracking Summer's feet,
Each twilight earlier call'd the Sun to meet,
With earlier smile the ray of morn to view
Fall on his shifting hut that gleams mid smoking dew ;
Bless'd with his herds, as in the patriarch's age,
The summer long to feed from stage to stage ;
O'er azure pikes serene and still, they go,
And hear the rattling thunder far below ;
Or lost at eve in sudden mist the day 460
Attend, or dare with minute-steps their way ;
Hang from the rocks that tremble o'er the steep,
And tempt the icy valley yawning deep,
O'er-walk the chasmy torrent's foam-lit bed,
Rock'd on the dizzy larch's narrow tread,
Whence Danger leans, and pointing ghastly, joys
To mock the mind with 'desperation's toys' ;
Or steal beneath loose mountains, half-deterr'd,
That sigh and shudder to the lowing herd.
—I see him, up the midway cliff he creeps 470
To where a scanty knot of verdure peeps,
Thence down the steep a pile of grass he throws
The fodder of his herds in winter snows.
Far different life to what tradition hoar
Transmits of days more bless'd in times of yore.²
Then Summer lengthen'd out his season bland,
And with rock-honey flow'd the happy land.

¹ This wind, which announces the spring to the Swiss, is called in their language Foen ; and is according to M. Raymond the Syroco of the Italians.

² This tradition of the golden age of the Alps, as M. Raymond observes, is highly interesting, interesting not less to the philosopher than to the poet. Here I cannot help remarking, that the superstitions of the Alps appear to be far from possessing that poetical character which so eminently distinguishes those of Scotland and the other mountainous northern countries. The Devil with his horns, etc., seems to be, in their idea, the principal agent that brings about the sublime natural revolutions that take place daily before their eyes.

Continual fountains welling cheer'd the waste,
 And plants were wholesome, now of deadly taste.
 Nor Winter yet his frozen stores had pil'd, 480
 Usurping where the fairest herbage smil'd;
 Nor Hunger forc'd the herds from pastures bare
 For scanty food the treacherous cliffs to dare.
 Then the milk-thistle bad those herds demand
 Three times a day the pail and welcome hand.
 But human vices have provok'd the rod
 Of angry Nature to avenge her God.
 Thus does the father to his sons relate,
 On the lone mountain top, their chang'd estate.
 Still, Nature, ever just, to him imparts 490
 Joys only given to uncorrupted hearts.
 —'Tis morn: with gold the verdant mountain
 glows,

More high, the snowy peaks with hues of rose.
 Far stretch'd beneath the many-tinted hills,
 A mighty waste of mist the valley fills,
 A solemn sea! whose vales and mountains round
 Stand motionless, to awful silence bound.
 A gulf of gloomy blue, that opens wide
 And bottomless, divides the midway tide.
 Like leaning masts of stranded ships appear 500
 The pines that near the coast their summits rear
 Of cabins, woods, and lawns a pleasant shore
 Bounds calm and clear the chaos still and hoar;
 Loud thro' that midway gulf ascending, sound
 Unnumber'd streams with hollow roar profound.
 Mounts thro' the nearer mist the chaunt of birds,
 And talking voices, and the low of herds,
 The bark of dogs, the drowsy tinkling bell,
 And wild-wood mountain lutes of saddest swell.
 Think not, suspended from the cliff on high 510
 He looks below with undelighted eye.

—No vulgar joy is his, at even tide
 Stretch'd on the scented mountain's purple side.
 For as the pleasures of his simple day
 Beyond his native valley hardly stray,
 Nought round it's darling precincts can he find
 But brings some past enjoyment to his mind,
 While Hope that ceaseless leans on Pleasure's urn
 Binds her wild wreathes, and whispers his return.
 Once Man entirely free, alone and wild, 520
 Was bless'd as free—for he was Nature's child.
 He, all superior but his God disdain'd,
 Walk'd none restraining, and by none restrain'd,

Confess'd no law but what his reason taught,
 Did all he wish'd, and wish'd but what he ought.
 As Man in his primæval dower array'd
 The image of his glorious sire display'd,
 Ev'n so, by vestal Nature guarded, here
 The traces of primæval Man appear.
 The native dignity no forms debase
 The eye sublime, and surly lion-grace. 530
 The slave of none, of beasts alone the lord,
 He marches with his flute, his book, and sword,
 Well taught by that to feel his rights, prepar'd
 With this 'the blessings he enjoys to guard.'

And as on glorious ground he draws his breath,
 Where Freedom oft, with Victory and Death,
 Hath seen in grim array amid their Storms
 Mixed with auxiliar Rocks, three hundred Forms;¹
 While twice ten thousand corselets at the view 540
 Dropp'd loud at once, Oppression shriek'd, and
 flew.

Oft as those sainted Rocks before him spread,
 An unknown power connects him with the dead.
 For images of other worlds are there,
 Awful the light, and holy is the air.
 Uncertain thro' his fierce uncultur'd soul
 Like lighted tempests troubled transports roll;
 To viewless realms his Spirit towers amain,
 Beyond the senses and their little reign.
 And oft, when pass'd that solemn vision by, 550
 He holds with God himself communion high,
 When the dread peal of swelling torrents fills
 The sky-roof'd temple of the eternal hills,
 And savage Nature humbly joins the rite,
 While flash her upward eyes severe delight.
 Or gazing from the mountain's silent brow,
 Bright stars of ice and azure worlds of snow,
 Where needle peaks of granite shooting bare
 Tremble in ever-varying tints of air,
 Great joy by horror tam'd dilates his heart, 560
 And the near heav'ns their own delights impart.
 —When the Sun bids the gorgeous scene farewell,
 Alps overlooking Alps their state upswell;

¹ Alluding to several battles which the Swiss in very small numbers have gained over their oppressors, the house of Austria; and, in particular, to one fought at Naeffels, near Glarus, where three hundred and thirty men defeated an army of between fifteen and twenty thousand Austrians. Scattered over the valley are to be found eleven stones, with this inscription, 1388, the year the battle was fought, marking out, as I was told upon the spot, the several places where the Austrians attempting to make a stand were repulsed anew.

Huge Pikes of Darkness named, of Fear¹ and
Storms,

Lift, all serene, their still, illumin'd forms,
In sea-like reach of prospect round him spread,
Ting'd like an angel's smile all rosy red.

When downward to his winter hut he goes,
Dear and more dear the lessening circle grows,
The hut which from the hills his eyes employs 570
So oft, the central point of all his joys.

And as a swift by tender cares oppress'd
Peeps often ere she dart into her nest,
So to th' untrodden floor, where round him looks
His father helpless as the babe he rocks,
Oft he descends to nurse the brother pair,
Till storm and driving ice blockade him there ;
There hears, protected by the woods behind,
Secure, the chiding of the baffled wind,
Hears Winter, calling all his Terrors round, 580
Rush down the living rocks with whirlwind sound.

Thro' Nature's vale his homely pleasures glide
Unstain'd by envy, discontent, and pride,
The bound of all his vanity to deck
With one bright bell a favourite heifer's neck ;
Content upon some simple annual feast,
Remember'd half the year, and hop'd the rest,
If dairy produce, from his inner hoard,
Of thrice ten summers consecrate the board.
—Alas! in every clime a flying ray 590

Is all we have to cheer our wintry way,
Condemn'd, in mists and tempests ever rife,
To pant slow up the endless Alp of life.
' Here,' cried a swain, whose venerable head
Bloom'd with the snow-drops of Man's narrow bed,
Last night, while by his dying fire, as clos'd
The day, in luxury my limbs repos'd,
' Here Penury oft from misery's mount will guide
Ev'n to the summer door his icy tide,
And here the avalanche of Death destroy 600
The little cottage of domestic Joy.

But, ah! th' unwilling mind may more than trace
The general sorrows of the human race :
The churlish gales, that unremitting blow
Cold from necessity's continual snow,
To us the gentle groups of bliss deny
That on the noon-day bank of leisure lie.

¹ As Schreck-Horn, the pike of terror. Wetter-Horn, the pike of storms,
etc. etc.

Yet more; the tyrant Genius, still at strife
 With all the tender Charities of life,
 When close and closer they begin to strain, 610
 No fond hand left to staunch th' unclosing vein,
 Tearing their bleeding ties leaves Age to groan
 On his wet bed, abandon'd and alone.
 For ever, fast as they of strength become
 To pay the filial debt, for food to roam,
 The father forc'd by Powers that only deign
 That solitary Man disturb their reign,
 From his bare nest amid the storms of heaven
 Drives, eagle-like, his sons as he was driven,
 His last dread pleasure! watches to the plain— 620
 And never, eagle-like, beholds again.'

When the poor heart has all its joys resign'd,
 Why does their sad remembrance cleave behind?
 Lo! by the lazy Seine the exile roves,
 Or where thick sails illume Batavia's groves;
 Soft o'er the waters mournful measures swell,
 Unlocking bleeding Thought's 'memorial cell';
 At once upon his heart Despair has set
 Her seal, the mortal tear his cheek has wet;
 Strong poison not a form of steel can brave 630
 Bows his young hairs with sorrow to the grave.¹

Gay lark of hope thy silent song resume!
 Fair smiling lights the purpled hills illume!
 Soft gales and dews of life's delicious morn,
 And thou! lost fragrance of the heart return!
 Soon² flies the little joy to man allow'd,
 And tears before him travel like a cloud.
 For come Diseases on, and Penury's rage,
 Labour, and Pain, and Grief, and joyless Age,
 And Conscience dogging close his bleeding way 640
 Cries out, and leads her Spectres to their prey,
 'Till Hope-deserted, long in vain his breath
 Implores the dreadful untried sleep of Death.
 —Mid savage rocks and seas of snow that shine
 Between interminable tracts of pine,
 Round a lone fane the human Genii mourn,
 Where fierce the rays of woe collected burn.
 —From viewless lamps a ghastly dimness falls,
 And ebbs uncertain on the troubled walls,

¹ The effect of the famous air, called in French *Ranz des Vaches*, upon the Swiss troops removed from their native country is well known, as also the injunction of not playing it on pain of death, before the regiments of that nation, in the service of France and Holland.

² *Optima quaeque dies*, etc.

Dim dreadful faces thro' the gloom appear,
 Abortive Joy, and Hope that works in fear,
 While strives a secret Power to hush the croud,
 Pain's wild rebellious burst proclaims her rights aloud.

65o

Oh give not me that eye of hard disdain
 That views undimm'd Einsiedlen's wretched fane.¹
 Mid muttering prayers all sounds of torment meet,
 Dire clap of hands, distracted chafe of feet,
 While loud and dull ascends the weeping cry,
 Surely in other thoughts contempt may die.
 If the sad grave of human ignorance bear
 One flower of hope—Oh pass and leave it there.
 —The tall Sun, tip-toe on an Alpine spire,
 Flings o'er the desert blood-red streams of fire.
 At such an hour there are who love to stray,
 And meet the gladdening pilgrims on their way.
 —Now with joy's tearful kiss each other greet,
 Nor longer naked be your way-worn feet,
 For ye have reach'd at last the happy shore,
 Where the charm'd worm of pain shall gnaw no more.
 How gayly murmur and how sweetly taste
 The fountains² rear'd for you amid the waste!
 Yes I will see you when ye first behold
 Those turrets tipp'd by hope with morning gold,
 And watch, while on your brows the cross ye make,
 Round your pale eyes a wintry lustre wake.
 —Without one hope her written griefs to blot,
 Save in the land where all things are forgot,
 My heart, alive to transports long unknown,
 Half wishes your delusion were it's own.
 Last let us turn to where Chamouny³ shields,
 Bosom'd in gloomy woods, her golden fields,
 Five streams of ice amid her cots descend,
 And with wild flowers and blooming orchards blend,
 A scene more fair than what the Grecian feigns
 Of purple lights and ever vernal plains.
 Here lawns and shades by breezy rivulets fann'd,
 Here all the Seasons revel hand in hand.
 —Red stream the cottage lights; the landscape fades,
 Erroneous wavering mid the twilight shades.

66o

67o

68o

¹ This shrine is resorted to, from a hope of relief, by multitudes from every corner of the Catholick world, labouring under mental or bodily afflictions.

² Rude fountains built and covered with sheds for the accommodation of the pilgrims, in their ascent of the mountain. Under those sheds the sentimental traveller and the philosopher may find interesting sources of meditation.

³ This word is pronounced upon the spot Châamouny. I have taken the liberty of reading it long, thinking it more musical.

Alone ascends that mountain nam'd of white¹ 690
 That dallies with the Sun the summer night.
 Six thousand years amid his lonely bounds
 The voice of Ruin, day and night, resounds.
 Where Horror-led his sea of ice assails,
 Havoc and Chaos blast a thousand vales,
 In waves, like two enormous serpents, wind
 And drag their length of deluge train behind.
 Between the pine's enormous boughs descri'd
 Serene he towers, in deepest purple dy'd;
 Glad Day-light laughs upon his top of snow, 700
 Glitter the stars above, and all is black below.

At such an hour I heav'd the human sigh,
 When roared the sullen Arve in anger by,
 That not for thee, delicious vale! unfold
 Thy reddening orchards, and thy fields of gold;
 That thou, the slave of slaves,² art doom'd to pine, }
 While no Italian arts their charms combine
 To teach the skirt of thy dark cloud to shine; }
 For thy poor babes that, hurrying from the door,
 With pale-blue hands, and eyes that fix'd implore, 710
 Dead muttering lips, and hair of hungry white,
 Besiege the traveller whom they half affright.

—Yes, were it mine, the cottage meal to share
 Forc'd from my native mountains bleak and bare;
 O'er Anet's³ hopeless seas of marsh to stray,
 Her shrill winds roaring round my lonely way;
 To scent the sweets of Piedmont's breathing rose,
 And orange gale that o'er Lugano blows;
 In the wide range of many a weary round,
 Still have my pilgrim feet unfailing found, 720
 As despot courts their blaze of gems displays, }
 Ev'n by the secret cottage far away
 The lily of domestic joy decay; }
 While Freedom's farthest hamlets blessings share,
 Found still beneath her smile, and only there.
 The casement shade more luscious woodbine
 binds,

And to the door a neater pathway winds,
 At early morn the careful housewife, led
 To cull her dinner from it's garden bed,
 Of weedless herbs a healthier prospect sees, 730
 While hum with busier joy her happy bees;

¹ It is only from the higher part of the valley of Châmony that Mont Blanc is visible.

² It is scarce necessary to observe that these lines were written before the emancipation of Savoy.

³ A vast extent of marsh so called near the lake of Neufchatel.

In brighter rows her table wealth aspires,
 And laugh with merrier blaze her evening fires ;
 Her infant's cheeks with fresher roses glow,
 And wilder graces sport around their brow ;
 By clearer taper lit a cleanlier board
 Receives at supper hour her tempting hoard ;
 The chamber hearth with fresher boughs is spread,
 And whiter is the hospitable bed.
 —And thou ! fair favoured region ! which my soul 740
 Shall love, 'till Life has broke her golden bowl,
 Till Death's cold touch her cistern-wheel assail,
 And vain regret and vain desire shall fail ;
 Tho' now, where erst the grey-clad peasant stray'd,
 To break the quiet of the village shade
 Gleam war's ¹ discordant habits thro' the trees,
 And the red banner mock the sullen breeze ;
 'Tho' now no more thy maids their voices suit
 To the low-warbled breath of twilight lute,
 And heard, the pausing village hum between, 750
 No solemn songstress lull the fading green,
 Scared by the fife, and rumbling drum's alarms,
 And the short thunder, and the flash of arms ;
 While, as Night bids the startling uproar die,
 Sole sound, the sourd ² renews his mournful cry :
 —Yet, hast thou found that Freedom spreads her pow'r
 Beyond the cottage hearth, the cottage door :
 All nature smiles ; and owns beneath her eyes
 Her fields peculiar, and peculiar skies.
 Yes, as I roam'd where Loiret's ³ waters glide 760
 Thro' rustling aspens heard from side to side,

¹ This, as may be supposed, was written before France became the seat of war.

² An insect so called, which emits a short, melancholy cry, heard, at the close of the summer evenings, on the banks of the Loire.

³ The river Loiret, which has the honour of giving name to a department, rises out of the earth at a place, called La Source, a league and a half south-east of Orleans, and taking at once the character of a considerable stream, winds under a most delicious bank on its left, with a flat country of meadows, woods, and vineyards on its right, till it falls into the Loire about three or four leagues below Orleans. The hand of false taste has committed on its banks those outrages which the Abbé de Lille so pathetically deprecates in those charming verses descriptive of the Seine, visiting in secret the retreat of his friend Watelet. Much as the Loiret, in its short course, suffers from injudicious ornament, yet are there spots to be found upon its banks as soothing as meditation could wish for : the curious traveller may meet with some of them where it loses itself among the mills in the neighbourhood of the villa called La Fontaine. The walks of La Source, where it takes its rise, may, in the eyes of some people, derive an additional interest from the recollection that they were the retreat of Bolingbroke during his exile, and that here it was that his philosophical works were chiefly composed. The inscriptions of which he speaks in one of his letters to Swift descriptive of this spot, are not, I believe, now

When from october clouds a milder light
 Fell, where the blue flood rippled into white,
 Methought from every cot the watchful bird
 Crowed with ear-piercing power 'till then unheard ;
 Each clacking mill, that broke the murmuring streams,
 Rock'd the charm'd thought in more delightful
 dreams,

Chasing those long long dreams the falling leaf
 Awoke a fainter pang of moral grief ;
 The measured echo of the distant flail 770
 Winded in sweeter cadence down the vale ;
 A more majestic tide the water¹ roll'd
 And glowed the sun-gilt groves in richer gold :
 —Tho' Liberty shall soon, indignant, raise
 Red on his hills his beacon's comet blaze ;
 Bid from on high his lonely cannon sound,
 And on ten thousand hearths his shout rebound ;
 His larum-bell from village-tow'r to tow'r
 Swing on th' astounded ear it's dull undying roar :
 Yet, yet rejoice, tho' Pride's perverted ire 780
 Rouze Hell's own aid, and wrap thy hills in fire.
 Lo ! from th' innocuous flames, a lovely birth !
 With it's own Virtues springs another earth :
 Nature, as in her prime, her virgin reign
 Begins, and Love and Truth compose her train ;
 With pulseless hand, and fix'd unwearied gaze,
 Unbreathing Justice her still beam surveys :
 No more, along thy vales and viny groves,
 Whole hamlets disappearing as he moves,
 With cheeks o'erspread by smiles of baleful glow, 790
 On his pale horse shall fell Consumption go.

Oh give, great God, to Freedom's waves to ride
 Sublime o'er Conquest, Avarice, and Pride,
 To break, the vales where Death with Famine
 scow'rs,

And dark Oppression builds her thick-ribb'd tow'rs ;
 Where Machination her fell soul resigns,
 Fled panting to the centre of her mines ;
 Where Persecution decks with ghastly smiles
 Her bed, his mountains mad Ambition piles ;
 Where Discord stalks dilating, every hour, 800
 And crouching fearful at the feet of Pow'r,

extant. The gardens have been modelled within these twenty years according to a plan evidently not dictated by the taste of the friend of Pope.

¹ The duties upon many of the French rivers were so exorbitant that the poorer people, deprived of the benefit of water carriage, were obliged to transport their goods by land.

Like Lightnings eager for th' almighty word,
Look up for sign of havoc, Fire and Sword,¹
—Give them, beneath their breast while Gladness
springs,

To brood the nations o'er with Nile-like wings;
And grant that every sceptred child of clay,
Who cries, presumptuous, 'here their tides shall stay,'
Swept in their anger from th' affrighted shore,
With all his creatures sink—to rise no more.

To-night, my friend, within this humble cot 810
Be the dead load of mortal ills forgot,
Renewing, when the rosy summits glow
At morn, our various journey, sad and slow.

¹ ————And, at his heels,
Leash'd in like hounds, should Famine,
Sword, and Fire,
Crouch for employment.

APPENDIX, PREFACES, ETC.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION OF
LYRICAL BALLADS

THE first Volume of these Poems has already been submitted to general perusal. It was published, as an experiment, which, I hoped, might be of some use to ascertain, how far, by fitting to metrical arrangement a selection of the real language of men in a state of vivid sensation, that sort of pleasure and that quantity of pleasure may be imparted, which a Poet may rationally endeavour to impart.

I had formed no very inaccurate estimate of the probable effect of those Poems: I flattered myself that they who should be pleased with them would read them with more than common pleasure: and, on the other hand, I was well aware, that by those who should dislike them, they would be read with more than common dislike. The result has differed from my expectation in this only, that a greater number have been pleased than I ventured to hope I should please.

Several of my Friends are anxious for the success of these Poems, from a belief, that, if the views with which they were composed were indeed realised, a class of Poetry would be produced, well adapted to interest mankind permanently, and not unimportant in the quality, and in the multiplicity of its moral relations: and on this account they have advised me to prefix a systematic defence of the theory upon which the Poems were written. But I was unwilling to undertake the task, knowing that on this occasion the Reader would look coldly upon my arguments, since I might be suspected of having been principally influenced by the selfish and foolish hope of *reasoning* him into an approbation of these particular Poems: and I was still more unwilling to undertake the task, because, adequately to display the opinions, and fully to enforce the arguments, would require a space wholly disproportionate to a preface. For, to treat the subject with the clearness and coherence of which it is susceptible, it would be necessary to give a full account of the present state of the public taste in this country, and to determine how far this taste is healthy or depraved; which, again, could not be determined, without pointing out in what manner language and the human mind act and re-act on each other, and without retracing the revolutions, not of literature alone, but likewise of society itself. I have therefore altogether declined to enter regularly upon this defence; yet I am sensible, that there would be something like impropriety in abruptly obtruding upon the Public, without a few words of introduction, Poems so materially different from those upon which general approbation is at present bestowed.

It is supposed, that by the act of writing in verse an Author makes a formal engagement that he will gratify certain known habits of association ; that he not only thus apprises the Reader that certain classes of ideas and expressions will be found in his book, but that others will be carefully excluded. This exponent or symbol held forth by metrical language must in different eras of literature have excited very different expectations : for example, in the age of Catullus, Terence, and Lucretius, and that of Statius or Claudian ; and in our own country, in the age of Shakspeare and Beaumont and Fletcher, and that of Donne and Cowley, or Dryden, or Pope. I will not take upon me to determine the exact import of the promise which, by the act of writing in verse, an Author in the present day makes to his reader : but it will undoubtedly appear to many persons that I have not fulfilled the terms of an engagement thus voluntarily contracted. They who have been accustomed to the gaudiness and inane phraseology of many modern writers, if they persist in reading this book to its conclusion, will, no doubt, frequently have to struggle with feelings of strangeness and awkwardness : they will look round for poetry, and will be induced to inquire by what species of courtesy these attempts can be permitted to assume that title. I hope therefore the reader will not censure me for attempting to state what I have proposed to myself to perform ; and also (as far as the limits of a preface will permit) to explain some of the chief reasons which have determined me in the choice of my purpose : that at least he may be spared any unpleasant feeling of disappointment, and that I myself may be protected from one of the most dishonourable accusations which can be brought against an Author ; namely, that of an indolence which prevents him from endeavouring to ascertain what is his duty, or, when his duty is ascertained, prevents him from performing it.

The principal object, then, proposed in these Poems was to choose incidents and situations from common life, and to relate or describe them, throughout, as far as was possible in a selection of language really used by men, and, at the same time, to throw over them a certain colouring of imagination, whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual aspect ; and, further, and above all, to make these incidents and situations interesting by tracing in them, truly though not ostentatiously, the primary laws of our nature : chiefly, as far as regards the manner in which we associate ideas in a state of excitement. Humble and rustic life was generally chosen, because, in that condition, the essential passions of the heart find a better soil in which they can attain their maturity, are less under restraint, and speak a plainer and more emphatic language ; because in that condition of life our elementary feelings coexist in a state of greater simplicity, and, consequently, may be more accurately contemplated, and more forcibly communicated ; because the manners of rural life germinate from those elementary feelings, and, from the necessary character of rural occupations, are more easily comprehended, and are more durable ; and, lastly, because in that condition the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature. The language, too, of these men has been adopted (purified indeed from what appear to be its real defects, from all lasting and rational causes of dislike or disgust) because such men hourly communicate with the best objects from which the best part of language is originally derived ; and because, from their rank in society and the sameness and narrow circle of their intercourse, being less under the influence of social vanity, they convey their feelings and notions in simple

and unelaborated expressions. Accordingly, such a language, arising out of repeated experience and regular feelings, is a more permanent, and a far more philosophical language, than that which is frequently substituted for it by Poets, who think that they are conferring honour upon themselves and their art, in proportion as they separate themselves from the sympathies of men, and indulge in arbitrary and capricious habits of expression, in order to furnish food for fickle tastes, and fickle appetites, of their own creation.¹

I cannot, however, be insensible to the present outcry against the triviality and meanness, both of thought and language, which some of my contemporaries have occasionally introduced into their metrical compositions; and I acknowledge that this defect, where it exists, is more dishonourable to the Writer's own character than false refinement or arbitrary innovation, though I should contend at the same time, that it is far less pernicious in the sum of its consequences. From such verses the Poems in these volumes will be found distinguished at least by one mark of difference, that each of them has a worthy *purpose*. Not that I always began to write with a distinct purpose formally conceived; but habits of meditation have, I trust, so prompted and regulated my feelings, that my descriptions of such objects as strongly excite those feelings, will be found to carry along with them a *purpose*. If this opinion be erroneous, I can have little right to the name of a Poet. For all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: and though this be true, Poems to which any value can be attached were never produced on any variety of subjects but by a man who, being possessed of more than usual organic sensibility, had also thought long and deeply. For our continued influxes of feeling are modified and directed by our thoughts, which are indeed the representatives of all our past feelings; and, as by contemplating the relation of these general representatives to each other, we discover what is really important to men, so, by the repetition and continuance of this act, our feelings will be connected with important subjects, till at length, if we be originally possessed of much sensibility, such habits of mind will be produced, that, by obeying blindly and mechanically the impulses of those habits, we shall describe objects, and utter sentiments, of such a nature, and in such connection with each other, that the understanding of the Reader must necessarily be in some degree enlightened, and his affections strengthened and purified.

It has been said that each of these poems has a purpose. Another circumstance must be mentioned which distinguishes these Poems from the popular Poetry of the day; it is this, that the feeling therein developed gives importance to the action and situation, and not the action and situation to the feeling.

A sense of false modesty shall not prevent me from asserting, that the Reader's attention is pointed to this mark of distinction, far less for the sake of these particular Poems than from the general importance of the subject. The subject is indeed important! For the human mind is capable of being excited without the application of gross and violent stimulants; and he must have a very faint perception of its beauty and dignity who does not know this, and who does not further know, that one being is elevated above another, in proportion as he possesses this capability. It has therefore appeared to me, that to endeavour to pro-

¹ It is worth while here to observe, that the affecting parts of Chaucer are almost always expressed in language pure and universally intelligible even to this day.

duce or enlarge this capability is one of the best services in which, at any period, a Writer can be engaged ; but this service, excellent at all times, is especially so at the present day. For a multitude of causes, unknown to former times, are now acting with a combined force to blunt the discriminating powers of the mind, and, unfitting it for all voluntary exertion, to reduce it to a state of almost savage torpor. The most effective of these causes are the great national events which are daily taking place, and the increasing accumulation of men in cities, where the uniformity of their occupations produces a craving for extraordinary incident, which the rapid communication of intelligence hourly gratifies. To this tendency of life and manners the literature and theatrical exhibitions of the country have conformed themselves. The invaluable works of our elder writers, I had almost said the works of Shakspeare and Milton, are driven into neglect by frantic novels, sickly and stupid German Tragedies, and deluges of idle and extravagant stories in verse. —When I think upon this degrading thirst after outrageous stimulation, I am almost ashamed to have spoken of the feeble endeavour made in these volumes to counteract it ; and, reflecting upon the magnitude of the general evil, I should be oppressed with no dishonourable melancholy, had I not a deep impression of certain inherent and indestructible qualities of the human mind, and likewise of certain powers in the great and permanent objects that act upon it, which are equally inherent and indestructible ; and were there not added to this impression a belief, that the time is approaching when the evil will be systematically opposed, by men of greater powers, and with far more distinguished success.

Having dwelt thus long on the subjects and aim of these Poems, I shall request the Reader's permission to apprise him of a few circumstances relating to their *style*, in order, among other reasons, that he may not censure me for not having performed what I never attempted. The Reader will find that personifications of abstract ideas rarely occur in these volumes ; and are utterly rejected, as an ordinary device to elevate the style, and raise it above prose. My purpose was to imitate, and, as far as possible, to adopt the very language of men ; and assuredly such personifications do not make any natural or regular part of that language. They are, indeed, a figure of speech occasionally prompted by passion, and I have made use of them as such ; but have endeavoured utterly to reject them as a mechanical device of style, or as a family language which Writers in metre seem to lay claim to by prescription. I have wished to keep the Reader in the company of flesh and blood, persuaded that by so doing I shall interest him. Others who pursue a different track will interest him likewise ; I do not interfere with their claim, but wish to prefer a claim of my own. There will also be found in these volumes little of what is usually called poetic diction ; as much pains has been taken to avoid it as is ordinarily taken to produce it ; this has been done for the reason already alleged, to bring my language near to the language of men ; and further, because the pleasure which I have proposed to myself to impart, is of a kind very different from that which is supposed by many persons to be the proper object of poetry. Without being culpably particular, I do not know how to give my Reader a more exact notion of the style in which it was my wish and intention to write, than by informing him that I have at all times endeavoured to look steadily at my subject ; consequently, there is I hope in these Poems little falsehood of description, and my ideas are expressed in language fitted to their respective importance. Something must have been gained by this

practice, as it is friendly to one property of all good poetry, namely, good sense: but it has necessarily cut me off from a large portion of phrases and figures of speech which from father to son have long been regarded as the common inheritance of Poets. I have also thought it expedient to restrict myself still further, having abstained from the use of many expressions, in themselves proper and beautiful, but which have been foolishly repeated by bad Poets, till such feelings of disgust are connected with them as it is scarcely possible by any art of association to overpower.

If in a poem there should be found a series of lines, or even a single line, in which the language, though naturally arranged, and according to the strict laws of metre, does not differ from that of prose, there is a numerous class of critics, who, when they stumble upon these prosaisms, as they call them, imagine that they have made a notable discovery, and exult over the Poet as over a man ignorant of his own profession. Now these men would establish a canon of criticism which the Reader will conclude he must utterly reject, if he wishes to be pleased with these volumes. And it would be a most easy task to prove to him, that not only the language of a large portion of every good poem, even of the most elevated character, must necessarily, except with reference to the metre, in no respect differ from that of good prose, but likewise that some of the most interesting parts of the best poems will be found to be strictly the language of prose when prose is well written. The truth of this assertion might be demonstrated by innumerable passages from almost all the poetical writings, even of Milton himself. To illustrate the subject in a general manner, I will here adduce a short composition of Gray, who was at the head of those who, by their reasonings, have attempted to widen the space of separation betwixt Prose and Metrical composition, and was more than any other man curiously elaborate in the structure of his own poetic diction.

‘In vain to me the smiling mornings shine,
And reddening Phoebus lifts his golden fire:
The birds in vain their amorous descant join,
Or cheerful fields resume their green attire.
These ears, alas! for other notes repine;
A different object do these eyes require;
My lonely anguish melts no heart but mine;
And in my breast the imperfect joys expire;
Yet morning smiles the busy race to cheer,
And new-born pleasure brings to happier men;
The fields to all their wonted tribute bear;
To warm their little loves the birds complain.
I fruitless mourn to him that cannot hear,
And weep the more because I weep in vain.’

It will easily be perceived, that the only part of this Sonnet which is of any value is the lines printed in Italics; it is equally obvious, that, except in the rhyme, and in the use of the single word ‘fruitless’ for fruitlessly, which is so far a defect, the language of these lines does in no respect differ from that of prose.

By the foregoing quotation it has been shown that the language of Prose may yet be well adapted to Poetry; and it was previously asserted, that a large portion of the language of every good poem can in no respect differ from that of good Prose. We will go further. It may be safely affirmed, that there neither is, nor can be, any *essential*

difference between the language of prose and metrical composition. We are fond of tracing the resemblance between Poetry and Painting, and, accordingly, we call them Sisters: but where shall we find bonds of connection sufficiently strict to typify the affinity betwixt metrical and prose composition? They both speak by and to the same organs; the bodies in which both of them are clothed may be said to be of the same substance, their affections are kindred, and almost identical, not necessarily differing even in degree; Poetry¹ sheds no tears 'such as Angels weep,' but natural and human tears; she can boast of no celestial ichor that distinguishes her vital juices from those of prose; the same human blood circulates through the veins of them both.

If it be affirmed that rhyme and metrical arrangement of themselves constitute a distinction which overturns what has just been said on the strict affinity of metrical language with that of prose, and paves the way for other artificial distinctions which the mind voluntarily admits, I answer that the language of such Poetry as is here recommended is, as far as is possible, a selection of the language really spoken by men; that this selection, wherever it is made with true taste and feeling, will of itself form a distinction far greater than would at first be imagined, and will entirely separate the composition from the vulgarity and meanness of ordinary life; and, if metre be superadded thereto, I believe that a dissimilitude will be produced altogether sufficient for the gratification of a rational mind. What other distinction would we have? Whence is it to come? And where is it to exist? Not, surely, where the Poet speaks through the mouths of his characters; it cannot be necessary here, either for elevation of style, or any of its supposed ornaments: for, if the Poet's subject be judiciously chosen, it will naturally, and upon fit occasion, lead him to passions the language of which, if selected truly and judiciously, must necessarily be dignified and variegated, and alive with metaphors and figures. I forbear to speak of an incongruity which would shock the intelligent Reader, should the Poet interweave any foreign splendour of his own with that which the passion naturally suggests: it is sufficient to say that such addition is unnecessary. And, surely, it is more probable that those passages, which with propriety abound with metaphors and figures, will have their due effect, if, upon other occasions where the passions are of a milder character, the style also be subdued and temperate.

But, as the pleasure which I hope to give by the Poems now presented to the Reader must depend entirely on just notions upon this subject, and, as it is in itself of high importance to our taste and moral feelings, I cannot content myself with these detached remarks. And if, in what I am about to say, it shall appear to some that my labour is unnecessary, and that I am like a man fighting a battle without enemies, such persons may be reminded, that, whatever be the language outwardly holden by men, a practical faith in the opinions which I am wishing to establish is almost unknown. If my conclusions are admitted and carried as far as they must be carried if admitted at all, our judgments

¹ I here use the word 'Poetry' (though against my own judgment) as opposed to the word Prose, and synonymous with metrical composition. But much confusion has been introduced into criticism by this contradistinction of Poetry and Prose, instead of the more philosophical one of Poetry and Matter of Fact, or Science. The only strict antithesis to Prose is Metre; nor is this, in truth, a *strict* antithesis, because lines and passages of metre so naturally occur in writing prose, that it would be scarcely possible to avoid them, even were it desirable.

concerning the works of the greatest Poets both ancient and modern will be far different from what they are at present, both when we praise, and when we censure: and our moral feelings influencing and influenced by these judgments will, I believe, be corrected and purified.

Taking up the subject, then, upon general grounds, let me ask, What is meant by the word Poet? What is a Poet? To whom does he address himself? And what language is to be expected from him?—He is a man speaking to men: a man, it is true, endowed with more lively sensibility, more enthusiasm and tenderness, who has a greater knowledge of human nature, and a more comprehensive soul, than are supposed to be common among mankind; a man pleased with his own passions and volitions, and who rejoices more than other men in the spirit of life that is in him; delighting to contemplate similar volitions and passions as manifested in the goings-on of the Universe, and habitually impelled to create them where he does not find them. To these qualities he has added a disposition to be affected more than other men by absent things as if they were present; an ability of conjuring up in himself passions, which are indeed far from being the same as those produced by real events, yet (especially in those parts of the general sympathy which are pleasing and delightful) do more nearly resemble the passions produced by real events, than anything which, from the motions of their own minds merely, other men are accustomed to feel in themselves:—whence, and from practice, he has acquired a greater readiness and power in expressing what he thinks and feels, and especially those thoughts and feelings which, by his own choice, or from the structure of his own mind, arise in him without immediate external excitement.

But whatever portion of this faculty we may suppose even the greatest Poet to possess, there cannot be a doubt that the language which it will suggest to him, must often, in liveliness and truth, fall short of that which is uttered by men in real life, under the actual pressure of those passions, certain shadows of which the Poet thus produces, or feels to be produced, in himself.

However exalted a notion we would wish to cherish of the character of a Poet, it is obvious, that while he describes and imitates passions, his employment is in some degree mechanical, compared with the freedom and power of real and substantial action and suffering. So that it will be the wish of the Poet to bring his feelings near to those of the persons whose feelings he describes, nay, for short spaces of time, perhaps, to let himself slip into an entire delusion, and even confound and identify his own feelings with theirs; modifying only the language which is thus suggested to him by a consideration that he describes for a particular purpose, that of giving pleasure. Here, then, he will apply the principle of selection which has been already insisted upon. He will depend upon this for removing what would otherwise be painful or disgusting in the passion; he will feel that there is no necessity to trick out or to elevate nature: and, the more industriously he applies this principle, the deeper will be his faith that no words, which *his* fancy or imagination can suggest, will be to be compared with those which are the emanations of reality and truth.

But it may be said by those who do not object to the general spirit of these remarks, that, as it is impossible for the Poet to produce upon all occasions language as exquisitely fitted for the passion as that which the real passion itself suggests, it is proper that he should consider himself as in the situation of a translator, who does not scruple to substitute

excellencies of another kind for those which are unattainable by him ; and endeavours occasionally to surpass his original, in order to make some amends for the general inferiority to which he feels that he must submit. But this would be to encourage idleness and unmanly despair. Further, it is the language of men who speak of what they do not understand ; who talk of Poetry as of a matter of amusement and idle pleasure ; who will converse with us as gravely about a *taste* for Poetry, as they express it, as if it were a thing as indifferent as a taste for rope-dancing, or Frontinac or Sherry. Aristotle, I have been told, has said, that Poetry is the most philosophic of all writing : it is so : its object is truth, not individual and local, but general, and operative ; not standing upon external testimony, but carried alive into the heart by passion ; truth which is its own testimony, which gives competence and confidence to the tribunal to which it appeals, and receives them from the same tribunal. Poetry is the image of man and nature. The obstacles which stand in the way of the fidelity of the Biographer and Historian, and of their consequent utility, are incalculably greater than those which are to be encountered by the Poet who comprehends the dignity of his art. The Poet writes under one restriction only, namely, the necessity of giving immediate pleasure to a human Being possessed of that information which may be expected from him, not as a lawyer, a physician, a mariner, an astronomer, or a natural philosopher, but as a Man. Except this one restriction, there is no object standing between the Poet and the image of things ; between this, and the Biographer and Historian, there are a thousand.

Nor let this necessity of producing immediate pleasure be considered as a degradation of the Poet's art. It is far otherwise. It is an acknowledgment of the beauty of the universe, an acknowledgment more sincere, because not formal, but indirect ; it is a task light and easy to him who looks at the world in the spirit of love : further, it is a homage paid to the native and naked dignity of man, to the grand elementary principle of pleasure, by which he knows, and feels, and lives, and moves. We have no sympathy but what is propagated by pleasure : I would not be misunderstood ; but wherever we sympathise with pain, it will be found that the sympathy is produced and carried on by subtle combinations with pleasure. We have no knowledge, that is, no general principles drawn from the contemplation of particular facts, but what has been built up by pleasure, and exists in us by pleasure alone. The Man of science, the Chemist and Mathematician, whatever difficulties and disgusts they may have had to struggle with, know and feel this. However painful may be the objects with which the Anatomist's knowledge is connected, he feels that his knowledge is pleasure ; and where he has no pleasure he has no knowledge. What then does the Poet ? He considers man and the objects that surround him as acting and re-acting upon each other, so as to produce an infinite complexity of pain and pleasure ; he considers man in his own nature and in his ordinary life as contemplating this with a certain quantity of immediate knowledge, with certain convictions, intuitions, and deductions, which from habit acquire the quality of intuitions ; he considers him as looking upon the complex scene of ideas and sensations, and finding everywhere objects that immediately excite in him sympathies which, from the necessities of his nature, are accompanied by an over-balance of enjoyment.

To this knowledge which all men carry about with them, and to these

sympathies in which, without any other discipline than that of our daily life, we are fitted to take delight, the Poet principally directs his attention. He considers man and nature as essentially adapted to each other, and the mind of man as naturally the mirror of the fairest and most interesting properties of nature. And thus the Poet, prompted by this feeling of pleasure, which accompanies him through the whole course of his studies, converses with general nature, with affections akin to those, which, through labour and length of time, the Man of science has raised up in himself, by conversing with those particular parts of nature which are the objects of his studies. The knowledge both of the Poet and the Man of science is pleasure; but the knowledge of the one cleaves to us as a necessary part of our existence, our natural and unalienable inheritance; the other is a personal and individual acquisition, slow to come to us, and by no habitual and direct sympathy connecting us with our fellow-beings. The Man of science seeks truth as a remote and unknown benefactor; he cherishes and loves it in his solitude: the Poet, singing a song in which all human beings join with him, rejoices in the presence of truth as our visible friend and hourly companion. Poetry is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge; it is the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all Science. Emphatically may it be said of the Poet, as Shakspeare hath said of man, 'that he looks before and after.' He is the rock of defence for human nature; an upholder and preserver, carrying everywhere with him relationship and love. In spite of difference of soil and climate, of language and manners, of laws and customs: in spite of things silently gone out of mind, and things violently destroyed; the Poet binds together by passion and knowledge the vast empire of human society, as it is spread over the whole earth, and over all time. The objects of the Poet's thoughts are everywhere; though the eyes and senses of man are, it is true, his favourite guides, yet he will follow wheresoever he can find an atmosphere of sensation in which to move his wings. Poetry is the first and last of all knowledge—it is as immortal as the heart of man. If the labours of Men of science should ever create any material revolution, direct or indirect, in our condition, and in the impressions which we habitually receive, the Poet will sleep then no more than at present; he will be ready to follow the steps of the Man of science, not only in those general indirect effects, but he will be at his side, carrying sensation into the midst of the objects of the science itself. The remotest discoveries of the Chemist, the Botanist, or Mineralogist, will be as proper objects of the Poet's art as any upon which it can be employed, if the time should ever come when these things shall be familiar to us, and the relations under which they are contemplated by the followers of these respective sciences shall be manifestly and palpably material to us as enjoying and suffering beings. If the time should ever come when what is now called science, thus familiarised to men, shall be ready to put on, as it were, a form of flesh and blood, the Poet will lend his divine spirit to aid the transfiguration, and will welcome the Being thus produced, as a dear and genuine inmate of the household of man.—It is not, then, to be supposed that any one, who holds that sublime notion of Poetry which I have attempted to convey, will break in upon the sanctity and truth of his pictures by transitory and accidental ornaments, and endeavour to excite admiration of himself by arts, the necessity of which must manifestly depend upon the assumed meanness of his subject.

What has been thus far said applies to Poetry in general ; but especially to those parts of composition where the Poet speaks through the mouths of his characters ; and upon this point it appears to authorise the conclusion that there are few persons of good sense, who would not allow that the dramatic parts of composition are defective, in proportion as they deviate from the real language of nature, and are coloured by a diction of the Poet's own, either peculiar to him as an individual Poet or belonging simply to Poets in general ; to a body of men who, from the circumstance of their compositions being in metre, it is expected will employ a particular language.

It is not, then, in the dramatic parts of composition that we look for this distinction of language ; but still it may be proper and necessary where the Poet speaks to us in his own person and character. To this I answer by referring the Reader to the description before given of a Poet. Among the qualities there enumerated as principally conducing to form a Poet, is implied nothing differing in kind from other men, but only in degree. The sum of what was said is, that the Poet is chiefly distinguished from other men by a greater promptness to think and feel without immediate external excitement, and a greater power in expressing such thoughts and feelings as are produced in him in that manner. But these passions and thoughts and feelings are the general passions and thoughts and feelings of men. And with what are they connected? Undoubtedly with our moral sentiments and animal sensations, and with the causes which excite these ; with the operations of the elements, and the appearances of the visible universe ; with storm and sunshine, with the revolutions of the seasons, with cold and heat, with loss of friends and kindred, with injuries and resentments, gratitude and hope, with fear and sorrow. These, and the like, are the sensations and objects which the Poet describes, as they are the sensations of other men, and the objects which interest them. The Poet thinks and feels in the spirit of human passions. How, then, can his language differ in any material degree from that of all other men who feel vividly and see clearly? It might be *proved* that it is impossible. But supposing that this were not the case, the Poet might then be allowed to use a peculiar language when expressing his feelings for his own gratification, or that of men like himself. But Poets do not write for Poets alone, but for men. Unless therefore we are advocates for that admiration which subsists upon ignorance, and that pleasure which arises from hearing what we do not understand, the Poet must descend from this supposed height ; and, in order to excite rational sympathy, he must express himself as other men express themselves. To this it may be added, that while he is only selecting from the real language of men, or, which amounts to the same thing, composing accurately in the spirit of such selection, he is treading upon safe ground, and we know what we are to expect from him. Our feelings are the same with respect to metre ; for, as it may be proper to remind the Reader, the distinction of metre is regular and uniform, and not, like that which is produced by what is usually called *POETIC DICTION*, arbitrary, and subject to infinite caprices upon which no calculation whatever can be made. In the one case, the Reader is utterly at the mercy of the Poet, respecting what imagery or diction he may choose to connect with the passion ; whereas, in the other, the metre obeys certain laws, to which the Poet and Reader both willingly submit because they are certain, and because no interference is made by them with the

passion, but such as the concurring testimony of ages has shown to heighten and improve the pleasure which co-exists with it.

It will now be proper to answer an obvious question, namely, Why, professing these opinions, have I written in verse? To this, in addition to such answer as is included in what has been already said, I reply, in the first place, Because, however I may have restricted myself, there is still left open to me what confessedly constitutes the most valuable object of all writing, whether in prose or verse; the great and universal passions of men, the most general and interesting of their occupations, and the entire world of nature before me—to supply endless combinations of forms and imagery. Now, supposing for a moment that whatever is interesting in these objects may be as vividly described in prose, why should I be condemned for attempting to superadd to such description the charm which, by the consent of all nations, is acknowledged to exist in metrical language? To this, by such as are yet unconvinced, it may be answered that a very small part of the pleasure given by Poetry depends upon the metre, and that it is injudicious to write in metre, unless it be accompanied with the other artificial distinctions of style with which metre is usually accompanied, and that, by such deviation, more will be lost from the shock which will thereby be given to the Reader's associations than will be counterbalanced by any pleasure which he can derive from the general power of numbers. In answer to those who still contend for the necessity of accompanying metre with certain appropriate colours of style in order to the accomplishment of its appropriate end, and who also, in my opinion, greatly underrate the power of metre in itself, it might, perhaps, as far as relates to these Volumes, have been almost sufficient to observe, that poems are extant, written upon more humble subjects, and in a still more naked and simple style, which have continued to give pleasure from generation to generation. Now, if nakedness and simplicity be a defect, the fact here mentioned affords a strong presumption that poems somewhat less naked and simple are capable of affording pleasure at the present day; and, what I wished *chiefly* to attempt, at present, was to justify myself for having written under the impression of this belief.

But various causes might be pointed out why, when the style is manly, and the subject of some importance, words metrically arranged will long continue to impart such a pleasure to mankind as he who proves the extent of that pleasure will be desirous to impart. The end of Poetry is to produce excitement in co-existence with an overbalance of pleasure; but, by the supposition, excitement is an unusual and irregular state of the mind; ideas and feelings do not, in that state, succeed each other in accustomed order. If the words, however, by which this excitement is produced be in themselves powerful, or the images and feelings have an undue proportion of pain connected with them, there is some danger that the excitement may be carried beyond its proper bounds. Now the co-presence of something regular, something to which the mind has been accustomed in various moods and in a less excited state, cannot but have great efficacy in tempering and restraining the passion by an intertexture of ordinary feeling, and of feeling not strictly and necessarily connected with the passion. This is unquestionably true; and hence, though the opinion will at first appear paradoxical, from the tendency of metre to divest language, in a certain degree, of its reality, and thus to throw a sort of half-consciousness of unsubstantial existence over the whole composition,

there can be little doubt but that more pathetic situations and sentiments, that is, those which have a greater proportion of pain connected with them, may be endured in metrical composition, especially in rhyme, than in prose. The metre of the old ballads is very artless; yet they contain many passages which would illustrate this opinion; and, I hope, if the following Poems be attentively perused, similar instances will be found in them. This opinion may be further illustrated by appealing to the Reader's own experience of the reluctance with which he comes to the re-perusal of the distressful parts of *Clarissa Harlowe*, or the *Gamester*; while Shakspeare's writings, in the most pathetic scenes, never act upon us, as pathetic, beyond the bounds of pleasure—an effect which, in a much greater degree than might at first be imagined, is to be ascribed to small, but continual and regular impulses of pleasurable surprise from the metrical arrangement. — On the other hand (what it must be allowed will much more frequently happen) if the Poet's words should be incommensurate with the passion and inadequate to raise the Reader to a height of desirable excitement, then, (unless the Poet's choice of his metre has been grossly injudicious) in the feelings of pleasure which the Reader has been accustomed to connect with metre in general, and in the feeling, whether cheerful or melancholy, which he has been accustomed to connect with that particular movement of metre, there will be found something which will greatly contribute to impart passion to the words, and to effect the complex end which the Poet proposes to himself.

If I had undertaken a SYSTEMATIC defence of the theory here maintained, it would have been my duty to develope the various causes upon which the pleasure received from metrical language depends. Among the chief of these causes is to be reckoned a principle which must be well known to those who have made any of the Arts the object of accurate reflection; namely, the pleasure which the mind derives from the perception of similitude in dissimilitude. This principle is the great spring of the activity of our minds and their chief feeder. From this principle the direction of the sexual appetite, and all the passions connected with it, take their origin: it is the life of our ordinary conversation; and upon the accuracy with which similitude in dissimilitude, and dissimilitude in similitude are perceived, depend our taste and our moral feelings. It would not be a useless employment to apply this principle to the consideration of metre, and to show that metre is hence enabled to afford much pleasure, and to point out in what manner that pleasure is produced. But my limits will not permit me to enter upon this subject, and I must content myself with a general summary.

I have said that poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings; it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity; the emotion is contemplated till, by a species of reaction, the tranquillity gradually disappears, and an emotion, kindred to that which was before the subject of contemplation, is gradually produced, and does itself actually exist in the mind. In this mood successful composition generally begins, and in a mood similar to this it is carried on; but the emotion, of whatever kind, and in whatever degree, from various causes, is qualified by various pleasures, so that in describing any passions whatsoever, which are voluntarily described, the mind will, upon the whole, be in a state of enjoyment. If Nature be thus cautious to preserve in a state of enjoyment a being so employed, the Poet ought to profit by the lesson held forth to him, and ought especially to take

care, that, whatever passions he communicates to his Reader, those passions, if his Reader's mind be sound and vigorous, should always be accompanied with an overbalance of pleasure. Now the music of harmonious metrical language, the sense of difficulty overcome, and the blind association of pleasure which has been previously received from works of rhyme or metre of the same or similar construction, an indistinct perception perpetually renewed of language closely resembling that of real life, and yet, in the circumstance of metre, differing from it so widely—all these imperceptibly make up a complex feeling of delight, which is of the most important use in tempering the painful feeling always found intermingled with powerful descriptions of the deeper passions. This effect is always produced in pathetic and impassioned poetry; while, in lighter compositions, the ease and gracefulness with which the Poet manages his numbers are themselves confessedly a principal source of the gratification of the Reader. All that it is *necessary* to say, however, upon this subject, may be effected by affirming, what few persons will deny, that, of two descriptions, either of passions, manners, or characters, each of them equally well executed, the one in prose and the other in verse, the verse will be read a hundred times where the prose is read once.

Having thus explained a few of my reasons for writing in verse, and why I have chosen subjects from common life, and endeavoured to bring my language near to the real language of men, if I have been too minute in pleading my own cause, I have at the same time been treating a subject of general interest; and for this reason a few words shall be added with reference solely to these particular poems, and to some defects which will probably be found in them. I am sensible that my associations must have sometimes been particular instead of general, and that, consequently, giving to things a false importance, I may have sometimes written upon unworthy subjects; but I am less apprehensive on this account, than that my language may frequently have suffered from those arbitrary connections of feelings and ideas with particular words and phrases, from which no man can altogether protect himself. Hence I have no doubt, that, in some instances, feelings, even of the ludicrous, may be given to my Readers by expressions which appeared to me tender and pathetic. Such faulty expressions, were I convinced they were faulty at present, and that they must necessarily continue to be so, I would willingly take all reasonable pains to correct. But it is dangerous to make these alterations on the simple authority of a few individuals, or even of certain classes of men; for where the understanding of an Author is not convinced, or his feelings altered, this cannot be done without great injury to himself: for his own feelings are his stay and support; and, if he set them aside in one instance, he may be induced to repeat this act till his mind shall lose all confidence in itself, and become utterly debilitated. To this it may be added, that the critic ought never to forget that he is himself exposed to the same errors as the Poet, and, perhaps, in a much greater degree: for there can be no presumption in saying of most readers, that it is not probable they will be so well acquainted with the various stages of meaning through which words have passed, or with the fickleness or stability of the relations of particular ideas to each other; and, above all, since they are so much less interested in the subject, they may decide lightly and carelessly.

Long as the Reader has been detained, I hope he will permit me to caution him against a mode of false criticism which has been applied to

Poetry, in which the language closely resembles that of life and nature. Such verses have been triumphed over in parodies, of which Dr. Johnson's stanza is a fair specimen :—

‘I put my hat upon my head
And walked into the Strand,
And there I met another man
Whose hat was in his hand.’

Immediately under these lines let us place one of the most justly admired stanzas of the ‘Babes in the Wood.’

‘These pretty Babes with hand in hand
Went wandering up and down ;
But never more they saw the Man
Approaching from the Town.’

In both these stanzas the words, and the order of the words, in no respect differ from the most unimpassioned conversation. There are words in both, for example, ‘the Strand,’ and ‘the Town,’ connected with none but the most familiar ideas ; yet the one stanza we admit as admirable, and the other as a fair example of the superlatively contemptible. Whence arises this difference ? Not from the metre, not from the language, not from the order of the words ; but the *matter* expressed in Dr. Johnson's stanza is contemptible. The proper method of treating trivial and simple verses, to which Dr. Johnson's stanza would be a fair parallelism, is not to say, this is a bad kind of poetry, or, this is not poetry ; but, this wants sense ; it is neither interesting in itself, nor can *lead* to anything interesting ; the images neither originate in that sane state of feeling which arises out of thought, nor can excite thought or feeling in the Reader. This is the only sensible manner of dealing with such verses. Why trouble yourself about the species till you have previously decided upon the genus ? Why take pains to prove that an ape is not a Newton, when it is self-evident that he is not a man ?

One request I must make of my reader, which is, that in judging these Poems he would decide by his own feelings genuinely, and not by reflection upon what will probably be the judgment of others. How common is it to hear a person say, I myself do not object to this style of composition, or this or that expression, but, to such and such classes of people it will appear mean or ludicrous ! This mode of criticism, so destructive of all sound unadulterated judgment, is almost universal : let the Reader then abide, independently, by his own feelings, and, if he finds himself affected, let him not suffer such conjectures to interfere with his pleasure.

If an Author, by any single composition, has impressed us with respect for his talents, it is useful to consider this as affording a presumption, that on other occasions where we have been displeased, he, nevertheless, may not have written ill or absurdly : and further, to give him so much credit for this one composition as may induce us to review what has displeased us, with more care than we should otherwise have bestowed upon it. This is not only an act of justice, but, in our decisions upon poetry especially, may conduce, in a high degree, to the improvement of our own taste ; for an *accurate* taste in poetry, and in all the other arts, as Sir Joshua Reynolds has observed, is an *acquired* talent, which can only be produced by thought and a long continued intercourse with the best models of composition. This is mentioned, not with so ridiculous a purpose as to prevent the most inexperienced Reader from judging for himself, (I have already said that I wish him to judge for himself ;) but merely to temper the rashness of decision, and to suggest, that, if Poetry

be a subject on which much time has not been bestowed, the judgment may be erroneous ; and that, in many cases, it necessarily will be so.

Nothing would, I know, have so effectually contributed to further the end which I have in view, as to have shown of what kind the pleasure is, and how that pleasure is produced, which is confessedly produced by metrical composition essentially different from that which I have here endeavoured to recommend : for the Reader will say that he has been pleased by such composition ; and what more can be done for him ? The power of any art is limited ; and he will suspect, that, if it be proposed to furnish him with new friends, that can be only upon condition of his abandoning his old friends. Besides, as I have said, the Reader is himself conscious of the pleasure which he has received from such composition, composition to which he has peculiarly attached the endearing name of Poetry ; and all men feel an habitual gratitude and something of an honourable bigotry, for the objects which have long continued to please them : we not only wish to be pleased, but to be pleased in that particular way in which we have been accustomed to be pleased. There is in these feelings enough to resist a host of arguments ; and I should be the less able to combat them successfully, as I am willing to allow, that, in order entirely to enjoy the Poetry which I am recommending, it would be necessary to give up much of what is ordinarily enjoyed. But, would my limits have permitted me to point out how this pleasure is produced, many obstacles might have been removed, and the Reader assisted in perceiving that the powers of language are not so limited as he may suppose ; and that it is possible for poetry to give other enjoyments, of a purer, more lasting, and more exquisite nature. This part of the subject has not been altogether neglected, but it has not been so much my present aim to prove, that the interest excited by some other kinds of poetry is less vivid, and less worthy of the nobler powers of the mind, as to offer reasons for presuming, that if my purpose were fulfilled, a species of poetry would be produced, which is genuine poetry ; in its nature well adapted to interest mankind permanently, and likewise important in the multiplicity and quality of its moral relations.

From what has been said, and from a perusal of the Poems, the Reader will be able clearly to perceive the object which I had in view : he will determine how far it has been attained ; and, what is a much more important question, whether it be worth attaining : and upon the decision of these two questions will rest my claim to the approbation of the Public.

APPENDIX

See page 493—‘ by what is usually called POETIC DICTION.’

PERHAPS, as I have no right to expect that attentive perusal, without which, confined, as I have been, to the narrow limits of a preface, my meaning cannot be thoroughly understood, I am anxious to give an exact notion of the sense in which the phrase poetic diction has been used ; and for this purpose, a few words shall here be added, concerning the origin and characteristics of the phraseology, which I have condemned under that name.

The earliest poets of all nations generally wrote from passion excited by real events ; they wrote naturally, and as men : feeling powerfully as

they did, their language was daring and figurative. In succeeding times, Poets, and Men ambitious of the fame of Poets, perceiving the influence of such language, and desirous of producing the same effect without being animated by the same passion, set themselves to a mechanical adoption of these figures of speech, and made use of them, sometimes with propriety, but much more frequently applied them to feelings and thoughts with which they had no natural connection whatsoever. A language was thus insensibly produced, differing materially from the real language of men in *any situation*. The Reader or Hearer of this distorted language found himself in a perturbed and unusual state of mind: when affected by the genuine language of passion he had been in a perturbed and unusual state of mind also: in both cases he was willing that his common judgment and understanding should be laid asleep, and he had no instinctive and infallible perception of the true to make him reject the false; the one served as a passport for the other. The emotion was in both cases delightful, and no wonder if he confounded the one with the other, and believed them both to be produced by the same, or similar causes. Besides, the Poet spake to him in the character of a man to be looked up to, a man of genius and authority. Thus, and from a variety of other causes, this distorted language was received with admiration; and Poets, it is probable, who had before contented themselves for the most part with misapplying only expressions which at first had been dictated by real passion, carried the abuse still further, and introduced phrases composed apparently in the spirit of the original figurative language of passion, yet altogether of their own invention, and characterised by various degrees of wanton deviation from good sense and nature.

It is indeed true, that the language of the earliest Poets was felt to differ materially from ordinary language, because it was the language of extraordinary occasions; but it was really spoken by men, language which the Poet himself had uttered when he had been affected by the events which he described, or which he had heard uttered by those around him. To this language it is probable that metre of some sort or other was early superadded. This separated the genuine language of Poetry still further from common life, so that whoever read or heard the poems of these earliest Poets felt himself moved in a way in which he had not been accustomed to be moved in real life, and by causes manifestly different from those which acted upon him in real life. This was the great temptation to all the corruptions which have followed: under the protection of this feeling succeeding Poets constructed a phraseology which had one thing, it is true, in common with the genuine language of poetry, namely, that it was not heard in ordinary conversation; that it was unusual. But the first Poets, as I have said, spake a language which, though unusual, was still the language of men. This circumstance, however, was disregarded by their successors; they found that they could please by easier means: they became proud of modes of expression which they themselves had invented, and which were uttered only by themselves. In process of time metre became a symbol or promise of this unusual language, and whoever took upon him to write in metre, according as he possessed more or less of true poetic genius, introduced less or more of this adulterated phraseology into his compositions, and the true and the false were inseparably interwoven until, the taste of men becoming gradually perverted, this language was received as a natural language: and at length, by the influence of books upon

men, did to a certain degree really become so. Abuses of this kind were imported from one nation to another, and with the progress of refinement this diction became daily more and more corrupt, thrusting out of sight the plain humanities of nature by a motley masquerade of tricks, quaintnesses, hieroglyphics, and enigmas.

It would not be uninteresting to point out the causes of the pleasure given by this extravagant and absurd diction. It depends upon a great variety of causes, but upon none, perhaps, more than its influence in impressing a notion of the peculiarity and exaltation of the Poet's character, and in flattering the Reader's self-love by bringing him nearer to a sympathy with that character; an effect which is accomplished by unsettling ordinary habits of thinking, and thus assisting the Reader to approach to that perturbed and dizzy state of mind in which if he does not find himself, he imagines that he is *balked* of a peculiar enjoyment which poetry can and ought to bestow.

The sonnet quoted from Gray, in the Preface, except the lines printed in Italics, consists of little else but this diction, though not of the worst kind; and indeed, if one may be permitted to say so, it is far too common in the best writers both ancient and modern. Perhaps in no way, by positive example, could more easily be given a notion of what I mean by the phrase *poetic diction* than by referring to a comparison between the metrical paraphrase which we have of passages in the Old and New Testament, and those passages as they exist in our common Translation. See Pope's *Messiah* throughout; Prior's 'Did sweeter sounds adorn my flowing tongue,' etc. etc. 'Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels,' etc. etc. 1st Corinthians, chap. xiii. By way of immediate example take the following of Dr. Johnson:—

'Turn on the prudent Ant thy heedless eyes,
Observe her labours, Sluggard, and be wise;
No stern command, no monitory voice,
Prescribes her duties, or directs her choice;
Yet, timely provident, she hastes away
To snatch the blessings of a plenteous day;
When fruitful Summer loads the teeming plain,
She crops the harvest, and she stores the grain.
How long shall sloth usurp thy useless hours,
Unnerve thy vigour, and enchain thy powers?
While artful shades thy downy couch enclose,
And soft solicitation courts repose,
Amidst the drowy charms of dull delight,
Year chases year with unremitted flight,
Till Want now following, fraudulent and slow,
Shall spring to seize thee, like an ambush'd foe.'

From this hubbub of words pass to the original. 'Go to the Ant, thou Sluggard, consider her ways, and be wise: which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest. How long wilt thou sleep, O Sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep. So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man.' Proverbs, chap. vi.

One more quotation, and I have done. It is from Cowper's Verses supposed to be written by Alexander Selkirk:—

'Religion! what treasure untold
Resides in that heavenly word!
More precious than silver and gold,
Or all that this earth can afford.

But the sound of the church-going bell
 These valleys and rocks never heard,
 Ne'er sighed at the sound of a knell,
 Or smiled when a sabbath appeared.

Ye winds, that have made me your sport
 Convey to this desolate shore
 Some cordial endearing report
 Of a land I must visit no more.
 My Friends, do they now and then send
 A wish or a thought after me?
 O tell me I yet have a friend,
 Though a friend I am never to see.'

This passage is quoted as an instance of three different styles of composition. The first four lines are poorly expressed; some Critics would call the language prosaic; the fact is, it would be bad prose, so bad, that it is scarcely worse in metre. The epithet 'church-going' applied to a bell, and that by so chaste a writer as Cowper, is an instance of the strange abuses which Poets have introduced into their language, till they and their Readers take them as matters of course, if they do not single them out expressly as objects of admiration. The two lines 'Ne'er sighed at the sound,' etc., are, in my opinion, an instance of the language of passion wrested from its proper use, and, from the mere circumstance of the composition being in metre, applied upon an occasion that does not justify such violent expressions; and I should condemn the passage, though perhaps few Readers will agree with me, as vicious poetic diction. The last stanza is throughout admirably expressed: it would be equally good whether in prose or verse, except that the Reader has an exquisite pleasure in seeing such natural language so naturally connected with metre. The beauty of this stanza tempts me to conclude with a principle which ought never to be lost sight of, and which has been my chief guide in all I have said,—namely, that in works of *imagination and sentiment*, for of these only have I been treating, in proportion as ideas and feelings are valuable, whether the composition be in prose or in verse, they require an exact one and the same language. Metre is but adventitious to composition, and the phraseology for which that passport is necessary, even where it may be graceful at all, will be little valued by the judicious.

ESSAY, SUPPLEMENTARY TO THE PREFACE

WITH the young of both sexes, Poetry is, like love, a passion; but, for much the greater part of those who have been proud of its power over their minds, a necessity soon arises of breaking the pleasing bondage; or it relaxes of itself;—the thoughts being occupied in domestic cares, or the time engrossed by business. Poetry then becomes only an occasional recreation; while to those whose existence passes away in a course of fashionable pleasure, it is a species of luxurious amusement. In middle and declining age, a scattered number of serious persons resort to poetry, as to religion, for a protection against the pressure of trivial employments, and as a consolation for the afflictions of life. And, lastly, there are many, who, having been enamoured of this art in their youth, have found leisure, after youth was spent, to cultivate general literature; in which poetry has continued to be comprehended as a *study*.

Into the above classes the Readers of poetry may be divided ; Critics abound in them all ; but from the last only can opinions be collected of absolute value, and worthy to be depended upon, as prophetic of the destiny of a new work. The young, who in nothing can escape delusion, are especially subject to it in their intercourse with Poetry. The cause, not so obvious as the fact is unquestionable, is the same as that from which erroneous judgments in this art, in the minds of men of all ages, chiefly proceed ; but upon Youth it operates with peculiar force. The appropriate business of poetry (which, nevertheless, if genuine, is as permanent as pure science), her appropriate employment, her privilege and her *duty*, is to treat of things not as they *are*, but as they *appear* ; not as they existed in themselves, but as they *seem* to exist to the *senses*, and to the *passions*. What a world of delusion does this acknowledged obligation prepare for the inexperienced ! what temptations to go astray are here held forth for them whose thoughts have been little disciplined by the understanding, and whose feelings revolt from the sway of reason !—When a juvenile Reader is in the height of his rapture with some vicious passage, should experience throw in doubts, or common-sense suggest suspicions, a lurking consciousness that the realities of the Muse are but shows, and that her liveliest excitements are raised by transient shocks of conflicting feeling and successive assemblages of contradictory thoughts—is ever at hand to justify extravagance, and to sanction absurdity. But, it may be asked, as these illusions are unavoidable, and, no doubt, eminently useful to the mind as a process, what good can be gained by making observations, the tendency of which is to diminish the confidence of youth in its feelings, and thus to abridge its innocent and even profitable pleasures ? The reproach implied in the question could not be warded off, if Youth were incapable of being delighted with what is truly excellent ; or, if these errors always terminated of themselves in due season. But, with the majority, though their force be abated, they continue through life. Moreover, the fire of youth is too vivacious an element to be extinguished or damped by a philosophical remark ; and, while there is no danger that what has been said will be injurious or painful to the ardent and the confident, it may prove beneficial to those who, being enthusiastic, are, at the same time, modest and ingenuous. The intimation may unite with their own misgivings to regulate their sensibility, and to bring in, sooner than it would otherwise have arrived, a more discreet and sound judgment.

If it should excite wonder that men of ability, in later life, whose understandings have been rendered acute by practice in affairs, should be so easily and so far imposed upon when they happen to take up a new work in verse, this appears to be the cause ;—that, having discontinued their attention to poetry, whatever progress may have been made in other departments of knowledge, they have not, as to this art, advanced in true discernment beyond the age of youth. If, then, a new poem fall in their way, whose attractions are of that kind which would have enraptured them during the heat of youth, the judgment not being improved to a degree that they shall be disgusted, they are dazzled ; and prize and cherish the faults for having had power to make the present time vanish before them, and to throw the mind back, as by enchantment, into the happiest season of life. As they read, powers seem to be revived, passions are regenerated, and pleasures restored. The Book was probably taken up after an escape from the burden of

business, and with a wish to forget the world, and all its vexations and anxieties. Having obtained this wish, and so much more, it is natural that they should make report as they have felt.

If Men of mature age, through want of practice, be thus easily beguiled into admiration of absurdities, extravagances, and misplaced ornaments, thinking it proper that their understandings should enjoy a holiday, while they are unbending their minds with verse, it may be expected that such Readers will resemble their former selves also in strength of prejudice, and an inaptitude to be moved by the unostentatious beauties of a pure style. In the higher poetry, an enlightened Critic chiefly looks for a reflection of the wisdom of the heart and the grandeur of the imagination. Wherever these appear, simplicity accompanies them; Magnificence herself when legitimate, depending upon a simplicity of her own, to regulate her ornaments. But it is a well-known property of human nature, that our estimates are ever governed by comparisons, of which we are conscious with various degrees of distinctness. Is it not, then, inevitable (confining these observations to the effects of style merely) that an eye, accustomed to the glaring hues of diction by which such Readers are caught and excited, will for the most part be rather repelled than attracted by an original Work, the colouring of which is disposed according to a pure and refined scheme of harmony? It is in the fine arts as in the affairs of life, no man can *serve* (*i.e.* obey with zeal and fidelity) two Masters.

As Poetry is most just to its own divine origin when it administers the comforts and breathes the spirit of religion, they who have learned to perceive this truth, and who betake themselves to reading verse for sacred purposes, must be preserved from numerous illusions to which the two Classes of Readers, whom we have been considering, are liable. But, as the mind grows serious from the weight of life, the range of its passions is contracted accordingly; and its sympathies become so exclusive, that many species of high excellence wholly escape, or but languidly excite, its notice. Besides, men who read from religious or moral inclinations, even when the subject is of that kind which they approve, are beset with misconceptions and mistakes peculiar to themselves. Attaching so much importance to the truths which interest them, they are prone to overrate the Authors by whom those truths are expressed and enforced. They come prepared to impart so much passion to the Poet's language, that they remain unconscious how little, in fact, they receive from it. And, on the other hand, religious faith is to him who holds it so momentous a thing, and error appears to be attended with such tremendous consequences, that, if opinions touching upon religion occur which the Reader condemns, he not only cannot sympathise with them, however animated the expression, but there is, for the most part, an end put to all satisfaction and enjoyment. Love, if it before existed, is converted into dislike; and the heart of the Reader is set against the Author and his book.—To these excesses, they, who from their professions ought to be the most guarded against them, are perhaps the most liable; I mean those sects whose religion, being from the calculating understanding, is cold and formal. For when Christianity, the religion of humility, is founded upon the proudest faculty of our nature, what can be expected but contradictions? Accordingly, believers of this cast are at one time contemptuous; at another, being troubled, as they are and must be, with inward misgivings, they are jealous and suspicious:—and at all seasons, they are under temptation

to supply by the heat with which they defend their tenets, the animation which is wanting to the constitution of the religion itself.

Faith was given to man that his affections, detached from the treasures of time, might be inclined to settle upon those of eternity;—the elevation of his nature, which this habit produces on earth, being to him a presumptive evidence of a future state of existence; and giving him a title to partake of its holiness. The religious man values what he sees chiefly as an 'imperfect shadowing forth' of what he is incapable of seeing. The concerns of religion refer to indefinite objects, and are too weighty for the mind to support them without relieving itself by resting a great part of the burthen upon words and symbols. The commerce between Man and his Maker cannot be carried on but by a process where much is represented in little, and the Infinite Being accommodates himself to a finite capacity. In all this may be perceived the affinity between religion and poetry; between religion—making up the deficiencies of reason by faith; and poetry—passionate for the instruction of reason; between religion—whose element is infinitude, and whose ultimate trust is the supreme of things, submitting herself to circumscription, and reconciled to substitutions; and poetry—ethereal and transcendent, yet incapable to sustain her existence without sensuous incarnation. In this community of nature may be perceived also the lurking incitements of kindred error;—so that we shall find that no poetry has been more subject to distortion than that species, the argument and scope of which is religious; and no lovers of the art have gone farther astray than the pious and the devout.

Whither then shall we turn for that union of qualifications which must necessarily exist before the decisions of a critic can be of absolute value? For a mind at once poetical and philosophical; for a critic whose affections are as free and kindly as the spirit of society, and whose understanding is severe as that of dispassionate government? Where are we to look for that initiatory composure of mind which no selfishness can disturb? For a natural sensibility that has been tutored into correctness without losing anything of its quickness; and for active faculties, capable of answering the demands which an Author of original imagination shall make upon them, associated with a judgment that cannot be duped into admiration by aught that is unworthy of it?—among those and those only, who, never having suffered their youthful love of poetry to remit much of its force, have applied to the consideration of the laws of this art the best power of their understandings. At the same time it must be observed—that, as this Class comprehends the only judgments which are trust-worthy, so does it include the most erroneous and perverse. For to be mistaught is worse than to be untaught; and no perverseness equals that which is supported by system, no errors are so difficult to root out as those which the understanding has pledged its credit to uphold. In this Class are contained censors, who, if they be pleased with what is good, are pleased with it only by imperfect glimpses, and upon false principles; who, should they generalise rightly, to a certain point, are sure to suffer for it in the end; who, if they stumble upon a sound rule, are fettered by misapplying it, or by straining it too far; being incapable of perceiving when it ought to yield to one of higher order. In it are found critics too petulant to be passive to a genuine poet, and too feeble to grapple with him; men, who take upon them to report of the course which *he* holds whom they are utterly unable to accompany,—confounded if he

turn quick upon the wing, dismayed if he soar steadily 'into the region';—men of palsied imaginations and indurated hearts; in whose minds all healthy action is languid, who therefore feed as the many direct them, or, with the many, are greedy after vicious provocatives;—judges, whose censure is auspicious, and whose praise ominous! In this class meet together the two extremes of best and worst.

The observations presented in the foregoing series are of too ungracious a nature to have been made without reluctance; and, were it only on this account, I would invite the reader to try them by the test of comprehensive experience. If the number of judges who can be confidently relied upon be in reality so small, it ought to follow that partial notice only, or neglect, perhaps long continued, or attention wholly inadequate to their merits—must have been the fate of most works in the higher departments of poetry; and that, on the other hand, numerous productions have blazed into popularity, and have passed away, leaving scarcely a trace behind them: it will be further found, that when Authors shall have at length raised themselves into general admiration and maintained their ground, errors and prejudices have prevailed concerning their genius and their works, which the few who are conscious of those errors and prejudices would deplore; if they were not recompensed by perceiving that there are select Spirits for whom it is ordained that their fame shall be in the world an existence like that of Virtue, which owes its being to the struggles it makes, and its vigour to the enemies whom it provokes;—a vivacious quality, ever doomed to meet with opposition, and still triumphing over it; and, from the nature of its dominion, incapable of being brought to the sad conclusion of Alexander, when he wept that there were no more worlds for him to conquer.

Let us take a hasty retrospect of the poetical literature of this Country for the greater part of the last two centuries, and see if the facts support these inferences.

Who is there that now reads the *Creation* of Dubartas? Yet all Europe once resounded with his praise; he was caressed by kings; and, when his Poem was translated into our language, the *Faery Queen* faded before it. The name of Spenser, whose genius is of a higher order than even that of Ariosto, is at this day scarcely known beyond the limits of the British Isles. And if the value of his works is to be estimated from the attention now paid to them by his countrymen, compared with that which they bestow on those of some other writers, it must be pronounced small indeed.

'The laurel, meed of mighty conquerors
And poets sage'—

are his own words; but his wisdom has, in this particular, been his worst enemy: while its opposite, whether in the shape of folly or madness, has been *their* best friend. But he was a great power, and bears a high name: the laurel has been awarded to him.

A dramatic Author, if he write for the stage, must adapt himself to the taste of the audience, or they will not endure him; accordingly the mighty genius of Shakspeare was listened to. The people were delighted: but I am not sufficiently versed in stage antiquities to determine whether they did not flock as eagerly to the representation of many pieces of contemporary Authors, wholly undeserving to appear upon the same boards. Had there been a formal contest for superiority

among dramatic writers, that Shakspeare, like his predecessors Sophocles and Euripides, would have often been subject to the mortification of seeing the prize adjudged to sorry competitors, becomes too probable, when we reflect that the admirers of Settle and Shadwell were, in a later age, as numerous, and reckoned as respectable in point of talent, as those of Dryden. At all events, that Shakspeare stooped to accommodate himself to the People, is sufficiently apparent; and one of the most striking proofs of his almost omnipotent genius, is, that he could turn to such glorious purpose those materials which the prepossessions of the age compelled him to make use of. Yet even this marvellous skill appears not to have been enough to prevent his rivals from having some advantage over him in public estimation; else how can we account for passages and scenes that exist in his works, unless upon a supposition that some of the grossest of them, a fact which in my own mind I have no doubt of, were foisted in by the Players, for the gratification of the many?

But that his Works, whatever might be their reception upon the stage, made but little impression upon the ruling Intellects of the time, may be inferred from the fact that Lord Bacon, in his multifarious writings, nowhere either quotes or alludes to him.¹ His dramatic excellence enabled him to resume possession of the stage after the Restoration; but Dryden tells us that in his time two of the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher were acted for one of Shakspeare's. And so faint and limited was the perception of the poetic beauties of his dramas in the time of Pope, that, in his Edition of the Plays, with a view of rendering to the general reader a necessary service, he printed between inverted commas those passages which he thought most worthy of notice.

At this day, the French Critics have abated nothing of their aversion to this darling of our Nation: 'the English, with their bouffon de Shakspeare,' is as familiar an expression among them as in the time of Voltaire. Baron Grimm is the only French writer who seems to have perceived his infinite superiority to the first names of the French Theatre: an advantage which the Parisian Critic owed to his German blood and German education. The most enlightened Italians, though well acquainted with our language, are wholly incompetent to measure the proportions of Shakspeare. The Germans only, of foreign nations, are approaching towards a knowledge and feeling of what he is. In some respects they have acquired a superiority over the fellow-countrymen of the Poet: for among us it is a current, I might say, an established opinion, that Shakspeare is justly praised when he is pronounced to be 'a wild irregular genius, in whom great faults are compensated by great beauties.' How long may it be before this misconception passes away, and it becomes universally acknowledged that the judgment of Shakspeare in the selection of his materials, and in the manner in which he has made them, heterogeneous as they often are, constitute a unity of their own, and contribute all to one great end, is not less admirable than his imagination, his invention, and his intuitive knowledge of human Nature?

There is extant a small Volume of miscellaneous poems, in which

¹ The learned Hakewill (a third edition of whose book bears date 1635), writing to refute the error 'touching Nature's perpetual and universal decay,' cites triumphantly the names of Ariosto, Tasso, Barts, and Spenser, as instances that poetic genius had not degenerated; but he makes no mention of Shakspeare.

Shakspeare expresses his own feelings in his own person. It is not difficult to conceive that the Editor, George Steevens, should have been insensible to the beauties of one portion of that Volume, the Sonnets; though in no part of the writings of this Poet is found, in an equal compass, a greater number of exquisite feelings felicitously expressed. But, from regard to the Critic's own credit, he would not have ventured to talk of an¹ act of parliament not being strong enough to compel the perusal of those little pieces, if he had not known that the people of England were ignorant of the treasures contained in them: and if he had not, moreover, shared the too common propensity of human nature to exult over a supposed fall into the mire of a genius whom he had been compelled to regard with admiration, as an inmate of the celestial regions — 'there sitting where he durst not soar.'

Nine years before the death of Shakspeare, Milton was born; and early in life he published several small poems, which, though on their first appearance they were praised by a few of the judicious, were afterwards neglected to that degree, that Pope in his youth could borrow from them without risk of its being known. Whether these poems are at this day justly appreciated, I will not undertake to decide: nor would it imply a severe reflection upon the mass of readers to suppose the contrary; seeing that a man of the acknowledged genius of Voss, the German poet, could suffer their spirit to evaporate; and could change their character, as is done in the translation made by him of the most popular of those pieces. At all events, it is certain that these Poems of Milton are now much read, and loudly praised; yet were they little heard of till more than 150 years after their publication; and of the Sonnets, Dr. Johnson, as appears from Boswell's Life of him, was in the habit of thinking and speaking as contemptuously as Steevens wrote upon those of Shakspeare.

About the time when the Pindaric odes of Cowley and his imitators, and the productions of that class of curious thinkers whom Dr. Johnson has strangely styled metaphysical Poets, were beginning to lose something of that extravagant admiration which they had excited, the *Paradise Lost* made its appearance. 'Fit audience find though few,' was the petition addressed by the Poet to his inspiring Muse. I have said elsewhere that he gained more than he asked; this I believe to be true; but Dr. Johnson has fallen into a gross mistake when he attempts to prove, by the sale of the work, that Milton's Countrymen were 'just to it' upon its first appearance. Thirteen hundred Copies were sold in two years; an uncommon example, he asserts, of the prevalence of genius in opposition to so much recent enmity as Milton's public conduct had excited. But, be it remembered that, if Milton's political and religious opinions, and the manner in which he announced them, had raised him many enemies, they had procured him numerous friends; who, as all personal danger was passed away at the time of publication, would be eager to procure the master-work of a man whom they revered, and whom they would be proud of praising. Take, from the number of purchasers, persons of this class, and also those who wished to possess the Poem as a religious work, and but few I fear would be left who sought for it on

¹ This slipshod insensibility was publicly reprehended by Mr. Coleridge in a course of Lectures upon Poetry given by him at the Royal Institution. For the various merits of thought and language in Shakspeare's Sonnets, see Numbers, 27, 29, 30, 32, 33, 54, 64, 66, 68, 73, 76, 86, 91, 92, 93, 97, 98, 105, 107, 108, 109, 111, 113, 114, 116, 117, 129, and many others.

account of its poetical merits. The demand did not immediately increase; 'for,' says Dr. Johnson, 'many more readers' (he means persons in the habit of reading poetry) 'than were supplied at first the Nation did not afford.' How careless must a writer be who can make this assertion in the face of so many existing title-pages to belie it! Turning to my own shelves, I find the folio of Cowley, seventh edition, 1681. A book near it is Flatman's *Poems*, fourth edition, 1686; Waller, fifth edition, same date. The *Poems* of Norris of Bemerton, not long after, went, I believe, through nine editions. What further demand there might be for these works I do not know; but I well remember, that, twenty-five years ago, the booksellers' stalls in London swarmed with the folios of Cowley. This is not mentioned in disparagement of that able writer and amiable man; but merely to show—that, if Milton's work were not more read, it was not because readers did not exist at the time. The early editions of the *Paradise Lost* were printed in a shape which allowed them to be sold at a low price, yet only three thousand copies of the Work were sold in eleven years; and the Nation, says Dr. Johnson, had been satisfied from 1623 to 1664, that is, forty-one years, with only two editions of the Works of Shakspeare; which probably did not together make one thousand Copies: facts adduced by the critic to prove the 'paucity of Readers.'—There were readers in multitudes; but their money went for other purposes, as their admiration was fixed elsewhere. We are authorised, then, to affirm, that the reception of the *Paradise Lost* and the slow progress of its fame, are proofs as striking as can be desired that the positions which I am attempting to establish are not erroneous.¹—How amusing to shape to one's self such a critique as a Wit of Charles's days, or a Lord of the Miscellanies or trading Journalist of King William's time, would have brought forth, if he had set his faculties industriously to work upon this Poem, everywhere impregnated with *original* excellence.

So strange indeed are the obliquities of admiration, that they whose opinions are much influenced by authority will often be tempted to think that there are no fixed principles² in human nature for this art to rest upon. I have been honoured by being permitted to peruse in MS. a tract composed between the period of the Revolution and the close of that century. It is the Work of an English Peer of high accomplishments, its object to form the character and direct the studies of his son. Perhaps nowhere does a more beautiful treatise of the kind exist. The good sense and wisdom of the thoughts, the delicacy of the feelings, and the charm of the style, are, throughout, equally conspicuous. Yet the Author, selecting among the Poets of his own country those whom he deems most worthy of his son's perusal, particularises only Lord Rochester, Sir John Denham, and Cowley. Writing about the same time, Shaftesbury, an author at present unjustly depreciated, describes the English Muses as only yet lisping in their cradles.

The arts by which Pope, soon afterwards, contrived to procure to himself a more general and a higher reputation than perhaps any English

¹ Hughes is express upon this subject: in his dedication of Spenser's Works to Lord Somers, he writes thus. 'It was your Lordship's encouraging a beautiful edition of *Paradise Lost* that first brought that incomparable Poem to be generally known and esteemed.'

² This opinion seems actually to have been entertained by Adam Smith, the worst critic, David Hume not excepted, that Scotland, a soil to which this sort of weed seems natural, has produced.

Poet ever attained during his life-time, are known to the judicious. And as well known is it to them, that the undue exertion of those arts is the cause why Pope has for some time held a rank in literature, to which, if he had not been seduced by an over-love of immediate popularity, and had confided more in his native genius, he never could have descended. He bewitched the nation by his melody, and dazzled it by his polished style, and was himself blinded by his own success. Having wandered from humanity in his Eclogues with boyish inexperience, the praise, which these compositions obtained, tempted him into a belief that Nature was not to be trusted, at least in pastoral Poetry. To prove this by example, he put his friend Gay upon writing those Eclogues which their author intended to be burlesque. The instigator of the work, and his admirers, could perceive in them nothing but what was ridiculous. Nevertheless, though these Poems contain some detestable passages, the effect, as Dr. Johnson well observes, 'of reality and truth became conspicuous even when the intention was to show them grovelling and degraded.' The Pastorals, ludicrous to such as prided themselves upon their refinement, in spite of those disgusting passages, 'became popular, and were read with delight, as just representations of rural manners and occupations.'

Something less than sixty years after the publication of the *Paradise Lost* appeared Thomson's 'Winter'; which was speedily followed by his other Seasons. It is a work of inspiration; much of it is written from himself, and nobly from himself. How was it received? 'It was no sooner read,' says one of his contemporary biographers, 'than universally admired: those only excepted who had not been used to feel, or to look for anything in poetry, beyond a *point* of satirical or epigrammatic wit, a smart *antithesis* richly trimmed with rhyme, or the softness of an *elegiac* complaint. To such his manly classical spirit could not readily commend itself; till, after a more attentive perusal, they had got the better of their prejudices, and either acquired or affected a truer taste. A few others stood aloof, merely because they had long before fixed the articles of their poetical creed, and resigned themselves to an absolute despair of ever seeing anything new and original. These were somewhat mortified to find their notions disturbed by the appearance of a poet, who seemed to owe nothing but to nature and his own genius. But, in a short time, the applause became unanimous; every one wondering how so many pictures, and pictures so familiar, should have moved them but faintly to what they felt in his descriptions. His digressions, too, the overflowings of a tender benevolent heart, charmed the reader no less; leaving him in doubt, whether he should more admire the Poet or love the Man.'

This case appears to bear strongly against us:—but we must distinguish between wonder and legitimate admiration. The subject of the work is the changes produced in the appearances of nature by the revolution of the year: and, by undertaking to write in verse, Thomson pledged himself to treat his subject as became a Poet. Now, it is remarkable that, excepting the nocturnal Reverie of Lady Winchelsea, and a passage or two in the *Windsor Forest* of Pope, the poetry of the period intervening between the publication of the *Paradise Lost* and the *Seasons* does not contain a single new image of external nature; and scarcely presents a familiar one from which it can be inferred that the eye of the Poet had been steadily fixed upon his object, much less that his feelings had urged him to work upon it in the spirit of genuine imagination. To

what a low state knowledge of the most obvious and important phenomena had sunk, is evident from the style in which Dryden has executed a description of Night in one of his Tragedies, and Pope his translation of the celebrated moonlight scene in the *Iliad*. A blind man, in the habit of attending accurately to descriptions casually dropped from the lips of those around him, might easily depict these appearances with more truth. Dryden's lines are vague, bombastic, and senseless;¹ those of Pope, though he had Homer to guide him, are throughout false and contradictory. The verses of Dryden, once highly celebrated, are forgotten; those of Pope still retain their hold upon public estimation,—nay, there is not a passage of descriptive poetry, which at this day finds so many and such ardent admirers. Strange to think of an enthusiast, as may have been the case with thousands, reciting those verses under the cope of a moonlight sky, without having his raptures in the least disturbed by a suspicion of their absurdity!—If these two distinguished writers could habitually think that the visible universe was of so little consequence to a poet, that it was scarcely necessary for him to cast his eyes upon it, we may be assured that those passages of the elder poets which faithfully and poetically describe the phenomena of nature, were not at that time holden in much estimation, and that there was little accurate attention paid to those appearances.

Wonder is the natural product of Ignorance; and as the soil was in such good condition at the time of the publication of the *Seasons*, the crop was doubtless abundant. Neither individuals nor nations become corrupt all at once, nor are they enlightened in a moment. Thomson was an inspired poet, but he could not work miracles; in cases where the art of seeing had in some degree been learned, the teacher would further the proficiency of his pupils, but he could do little more; though so far does vanity assist men in acts of self-deception, that many would often fancy they recognised a likeness when they knew nothing of the original. Having shown that much of what his biographer deemed genuine admiration must in fact have been blind wonderment—how is the rest to be accounted for?—Thomson was fortunate in the very title of his poem, which seemed to bring it home to the prepared sympathies of every one: in the next place, notwithstanding his high powers, he writes a vicious style; and his false ornaments are exactly of that kind which would be most likely to strike the undiscerning. He likewise abounds with sentimental commonplaces, that, from the manner in which they were brought forward, bore an imposing air of novelty. In any well-used copy of the *Seasons* the book generally opens of itself with the rhapsody on love, or with one of the stories (perhaps 'Damon and Musidora'); these also are prominent in our collections of Extracts, and are the parts of his Work which, after all, were probably most efficient in first recommending the author to general notice. Pope, repaying praises which he had received, and wishing to extol him to the highest, only styles him 'an elegant and philosophical Poet'; nor are we able to collect any unquestionable proofs that the true character-

1

CORTES alone in a night-gown.

'All things are hush'd as Nature's self lay dead;
The mountains seem to nod their drowsy head.
The little Birds in dreams their songs repeat,
And sleeping Flowers beneath the Night-dew sweat:
Even Lust and Envy sleep; yet Love denies
Rest to my soul, and slumber to my eyes.'

DRYDEN'S *Indian Emperor*.

istics of Thomson's genius as an imaginative poet¹ were perceived, till the elder Warton, almost forty years after the publication of the *Seasons*, pointed them out by a note in his *Essay on the Life and Writings of Pope*. In the *Castle of Indolence* (of which Gray speaks so coldly) these characteristics were almost as conspicuously displayed, and in verse more harmonious, and diction more pure. Yet that fine poem was neglected on its appearance, and is at this day the delight only of a few!

When Thomson died, Collins breathed forth his regrets in an Elegiac Poem, in which he pronounces a poetical curse upon *him* who should regard with insensibility the place where the Poet's remains were deposited. The Poems of the mourner himself have now passed through innumerable editions, and are universally known; but if, when Collins died, the same kind of imprecation had been pronounced by a surviving admirer, small is the number whom it would not have comprehended. The notice which his poems attained during his lifetime was so small, and of course the sale so insignificant, that not long before his death he deemed it right to repay to the bookseller the sum which he had advanced for them, and threw the edition into the fire.

Next in importance to the *Seasons* of Thomson, though at considerable distance from that work in order of time, come the *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*; collected, new-modelled, and in many instances (if such a contradiction in terms may be used) composed by the Editor, Dr. Percy. This work did not steal silently into the world, as is evident from the number of legendary tales that appeared not long after its publication; and had been modelled, as the authors persuaded themselves, after the old Ballad. The Compilation was, however, ill suited to the then existing taste of city society; and Dr. Johnson, 'mid the little senate to which he gave laws, was not sparing in his exertions to make it an object of contempt. The critic triumphed, the legendary imitators were deservedly disregarded, and, as undeservedly, their ill-imitated models sank, in this country, into temporary neglect; while Bürger, and other able writers of Germany, were translating or imitating these *Reliques*, and composing, with the aid of inspiration thence derived, poems which are the delight of the German nation. Dr. Percy was so abashed by the ridicule flung upon his labours from the ignorance and insensibility of the persons with whom he lived, that, though while he was writing under a mask he had not wanted resolution to follow his genius into the regions of true simplicity and genuine pathos (as is evinced by the exquisite ballad of 'Sir Cauline,' and by many other pieces), yet when he appeared in his own person and character as a poetical writer, he adopted, as in the tale of the 'Hermit of Warkworth,' a diction scarcely in any one of its features distinguishable from the vague, the glossy, and unfeeling language of his day. I mention this remarkable fact² with regret, esteeming the genius of Dr. Percy in this

¹ Since these observations upon Thomson were written, I have perused the second edition of his *Seasons* and find that even *that* does not contain the most striking passages which Warton points out for admiration; these, with other improvements, throughout the whole work, must have been added at a later period.

² Shenstone, in his *Schoolmistress*, gives a still more remarkable instance of this timidity. On its first appearance (see D'Israeli's 2nd Series of the *Curiosities of Literature*) the Poem was accompanied with an absurd prose commentary, showing, as indeed some incongruous expressions in the text imply, that the whole was intended for burlesque. In subsequent editions, the commentary was dropped, and the People have since continued to read in seriousness, doing for the Author what he had not courage openly to venture upon for himself.

kind of writing superior to that of any other man by whom in modern times it has been cultivated. That even Bürger (to whom Klopstock gave, in my hearing, a commendation which he denied to Goethe and Schiller, pronouncing him to be a genuine poet, and one of the few among the Germans whose works would last) had not the fine sensibility of Percy, might be shown from many passages, in which he has deserted his original only to go astray. For example,

'Now daye was gone, and night was come,
And all were fast asleepe,
All save the Lady Emeline,
Who sate in her bowre to weepe :

And soone she heard her true Love's voice
Low whispering at the walle,
Awake, awake, my dear Ladye,
'Tis I thy true-love call.'

Which is thus tricked out and dilated :—

'Als nun die Nacht Gebirg' und Thal
Vermummt in Rabenschatten,
Und Hochburgs Lampen überall
Schon ausgeflimmert hatten,
Und alles tief entschlafen war ;
Doch nur das Fräulein immerdar,
Voll Fieberangst, noch wachte,
Und seinen Ritter dachte :
Da horch ! Ein süßer Liebeston
Kam leis' empor geflogen.
"Ho, Trüdchen, ho ! Da bin ich schon !
Frisch auf ! Dich angezogen !"

But from humble ballads we must ascend to heroics.

All hail, Macpherson ! hail to thee, Sire of Ossian ! The Phantom was begotten by the snug embrace of an impudent Highlander upon a cloud of tradition—it travelled southward, where it was greeted with acclamation, and the thin Consistence took its course through Europe, upon the breath of popular applause. The Editor of the *Reliques* had indirectly preferred a claim to the praise of invention, by not concealing that his supplementary labours were considerable ! how selfish his conduct, contrasted with that of the disinterested Gael, who, like Lear, gives his kingdom away, and is content to become a pensioner upon his own issue for a beggarly pittance !—Open this far-famed Book !—I have done so at random, and the beginning of the 'Epic Poem Temora,' in eight Books, presents itself. 'The blue waves of Ullin roll in light. The green hills are covered with day. Trees shake their dusky heads in the breeze. Grey torrents pour their noisy streams. Two green hills with aged oaks surround a narrow plain. The blue course of a stream is there. On its banks stood Cairbar of Atha. His spear supports the king ; the red eyes of his fear are sad. Cormac rises on his soul with all his ghastly wounds.' Precious memorandums from the pocket-book of the blind Ossian !

If it be unbecoming, as I acknowledge that for the most part it is, to speak disrespectfully of Works that have enjoyed for a length of time a widely-spread reputation, without at the same time producing irrefragable proofs of their unworthiness, let me be forgiven upon this occasion.—Having had the good fortune to be born and reared in a mountainous country, from my very childhood I have felt the falsehood

that pervades the volumes imposed upon the world under the name of Ossian. From what I saw with my own eyes, I knew that the imagery was spurious. In nature everything is distinct, yet nothing defined into absolute independent singleness. In Macpherson's work, it is exactly the reverse; everything (that is not stolen) is in this manner defined, insulated, dislocated, deadened,—yet nothing distinct. It will always be so when words are substituted for things. To say that the characters never could exist, that the manners are impossible, and that a dream has more substance than the whole state of society, as there depicted, is doing nothing more than pronouncing a censure which Macpherson defied; when, with the steepes of Morven before his eyes, he could talk so familiarly of his Car-borne heroes;—of Morven, which, if one may judge from its appearance at the distance of a few miles, contains scarcely an acre of ground sufficiently accommodating for a sledge to be trailed along its surface.—Mr. Malcolm Laing has ably shown that the diction of this pretended translation is a motley assemblage from all quarters; but he is so fond of making out parallel passages as to call poor Macpherson to account for his '*ands*' and his '*buts*!' and he has weakened his argument by conducting it as if he thought that every striking resemblance was a *conscious* plagiarism. It is enough that the coincidences are too remarkable for its being probable or possible that they could arise in different minds without communication between them. Now as the Translators of the Bible, and Shakspeare, Milton, and Pope, could not be indebted to Macpherson, it follows that he must have owed his fine feathers to them; unless we are prepared gravely to assert, with Madame de Staël, that many of the characteristic beauties of our most celebrated English Poets are derived from the ancient Fingallian; in which case the modern translator would have been but giving back to Ossian his own.—It is consistent that Lucien Buonaparte, who could censure Milton for having surrounded Satan in the infernal regions with courtly and regal splendour, should pronounce the modern Ossian to be the glory of Scotland;—a country that has produced a Dunbar, a Buchanan, a Thomson, and a Burns! These opinions are of ill omen for the Epic ambition of him who has given them to the world.

Yet, much as those pretended treasures of antiquity have been admired, they have been wholly uninfluential upon the literature of the Country. No succeeding writer appears to have caught from them a ray of inspiration; no author, in the least distinguished, has ventured formally to imitate them—except the boy, Chatterton, on their first appearance. He had perceived, from the successful trials which he himself had made in literary forgery, how few critics were able to distinguish between a real ancient medal and a counterfeit of modern manufacture; and he set himself to the work of filling a magazine with *Saxon Poems*,—counterparts of those of Ossian, as like his as one of his misty stars is to another. This incapability to amalgamate with the literature of the Island, is, in my estimation, a decisive proof that the book is essentially unnatural; nor should I require any other to demonstrate it to be a forgery, audacious as worthless.—Contrast, in this respect, the effect of Macpherson's publication with the *Reliques* of Percy, so unassuming, so modest in their pretensions!—I have already stated how much Germany is indebted to this latter work; and for our own country, its poetry has been absolutely redeemed by it. I do not think that there is an able writer in verse of the present day who would not be proud to acknow-

ledge his obligations to the *Reliques*; I know that it is so with my friends; and, for myself, I am happy in this occasion to make a public avowal of my own.

Dr. Johnson, more fortunate in his contempt of the labours of Macpherson than those of his modest friend, was solicited not long after to furnish Prefaces biographical and critical for the works of some of the most eminent English Poets. The booksellers took upon themselves to make the collection; they referred probably to the most popular miscellanies, and, unquestionably, to their books of accounts; and decided upon the claim of authors to be admitted into a body of the most eminent, from the familiarity of their names with the readers of that day, and by the profits, which, from the sale of his works, each had brought and was bringing to the Trade. The Editor was allowed a limited exercise of discretion, and the Authors whom he recommended are scarcely to be mentioned without a smile. We open the volume of Prefatory Lives, and to our astonishment the *first* name we find is that of Cowley!—What is become of the morning-star of English Poetry? Where is the bright Elizabethan constellation? Or, if names be more acceptable than images, where is the ever-to-be-honoured Chaucer? where is Spenser? where Sidney? and, lastly, where he, whose rights as a poet, contradistinguished from those which he is universally allowed to possess as a dramatist, we have vindicated,—where Shakspeare?—These, and a multitude of others not unworthy to be placed near them, their contemporaries and successors, we have *not*. But in their stead, we have (could better be expected when precedence was to be settled by an abstract of reputation at any given period made, as in this case before us?) Roscommon, and Stepney, and Phillips, and Walsh, and Smith, and Duke, and King, and Spratt—Halifax, Granville, Sheffield, Congreve, Broome, and other reputed Magnates—metrical writers utterly worthless and useless, except for occasions like the present, when their productions are referred to as evidence what a small quantity of brain is necessary to procure a considerable stock of admiration, provided the aspirant will accommodate himself to the likings and fashions of his day.

As I do not mean to bring down this retrospect to our own times, it may with propriety be closed at the era of this distinguished event. From the literature of other ages and countries, proofs equally cogent might have been adduced, that the opinions announced in the former part of this Essay are founded upon truth. It was not an agreeable office, nor a prudent undertaking, to declare them; but their importance seemed to render it a duty. It may still be asked, where lies the particular relation of what has been said to these Volumes?—The question will be easily answered by the discerning Reader who is old enough to remember the taste that prevailed when some of these poems were first published seventeen years ago; who has also observed to what degree the poetry of this Island has since that period been coloured by them; and who is further aware of the unremitting hostility with which, upon some principle or other, they have each and all been opposed. A sketch of my own notion of the constitution of Fame has been given; and, as far as concerns myself, I have cause to be satisfied. The love, the admiration, the indifference, the slight, the aversion, and even the contempt, with which these Poems have been received, knowing, as I do, the source within my own mind, from which they have proceeded, and the labour and pains, which, when labour and pains appeared needful, have been bestowed upon them, must all, if I think consistently, be received as pledges and tokens,

bearing the same general impression, though widely different in value ;—they are all proofs that for the present time I have not laboured in vain ; and afford assurances, more or less authentic, that the products of my industry will endure.

If there be one conclusion more forcibly pressed upon us than another by the review which has been given of the fortunes and fate of poetical Works, it is this,—that every author, as far as he is great and at the same time *original*, has had the task of *creating* the taste by which he is to be enjoyed : so has it been, so will it continue to be. This remark was long since made to me by the philosophical Friend for the separation of whose poems from my own I have previously expressed my regret. The predecessors of an original Genius of a high order will have smoothed the way for all that he has in common with them ;—and much he will have in common ; but, for what is peculiarly his own, he will be called upon to clear and often to shape his own road :—he will be in the condition of Hannibal among the Alps.

And where lies the real difficulty of creating that taste by which a truly original poet is to be relished ? Is it in breaking the bonds of custom, in overcoming the prejudices of false refinement, and displacing the aversions of inexperience ? Or, if he labour for an object which here and elsewhere I have proposed to myself, does it consist in divesting the reader of the pride that induces him to dwell upon those points wherein men differ from each other, to the exclusion of those in which all men are alike, or the same ; and in making him ashamed of the vanity that renders him insensible of the appropriate excellence which civil arrangements, less unjust than might appear, and Nature illimitable in her bounty, have conferred on men who may stand below him in the scale of society ? Finally, does it lie in establishing that dominion over the spirits of readers by which they are to be humbled and humanised, in order that they may be purified and exalted ?

If these ends are to be attained by the mere communication of *knowledge*, it does *not* lie here.—TASTE, I would remind the reader, like IMAGINATION, is a word which has been forced to extend its services far beyond the point to which philosophy would have confined them. It is a metaphor, taken from a *passive* sense of the human body, and transferred to things which are in their essence *not* passive,—to intellectual *acts* and *operations*. The word, Imagination, has been overstrained, from impulses honourable to mankind, to meet the demands of the faculty which is perhaps the noblest of our nature. In the instance of Taste, the process has been reversed ; and from the prevalence of dispositions at once injurious and discreditable, being no other than that selfishness which is the child of apathy,—which, as Nations decline in productive and creative power, makes them value themselves upon a presumed refinement of judging. Poverty of language is the primary cause of the use which we make of the word, Imagination ; but the word, Taste, has been stretched to the sense which it bears in modern Europe by habits of self-conceit, inducing that inversion in the order of things whereby a passive faculty is made paramount among the faculties conversant with the fine arts. Proportion and congruity, the requisite knowledge being supposed, are subjects upon which taste may be trusted ; it is competent to this office ;—for in its intercourse with these the mind is *passive*, and is affected painfully or pleasurably as by an instinct. But the profound and the exquisite in feeling, the lofty and universal in thought and imagination ; or, in ordinary language, the pathetic and the sublime ;—are neither of

them, accurately speaking, objects of a faculty which could ever without a sinking in the spirit of Nations have been designated by the metaphor—*Taste*. And why? Because without the exertion of a co-operating *power* in the mind of the Reader, there can be no adequate sympathy with either of these emotions: without this auxiliary impulse, elevated or profound passion cannot exist.

Passion, it must be observed, is derived from a word which signifies *suffering*; but the connection which suffering has with effort, with exertion, and *action*, is immediate and inseparable. How strikingly is this property of human nature exhibited by the fact, that, in popular language, to be in a passion, is to be angry!—But,

‘Anger in hasty *words* or *blows*
Itself discharges on its foes.’

To be moved, then, by a passion, is to be excited, often to external, and always to internal, effort; whether for the continuance and strengthening of the passion, or for its suppression, accordingly as the course which it takes may be painful or pleasurable. If the latter, the soul must contribute to its support, or it never becomes vivid,—and soon languishes, and dies. And this brings us to the point. If every great poet with whose writings men are familiar, in the highest exercise of his genius, before he can be thoroughly enjoyed, has to call forth and to communicate *power*, this service, in a still greater degree, falls upon an original writer, at his first appearance in the world.—Of genius, the only proof is, the act of doing well what is worthy to be done, and what was never done before: Of genius, in the fine arts, the only infallible sign is the widening the sphere of human sensibility, for the delight, honour, and benefit of human nature. Genius is the introduction of a new element into the intellectual universe; or, if that be not allowed, it is the application of powers to objects on which they had not before been exercised, or the employment of them in such a manner as to produce effects hitherto unknown. What is all this but an advance, or a conquest, made by the soul of the poet? Is it to be supposed that the reader can make progress of this kind, like an Indian prince or general—stretched on his palanquin, and borne by his slaves? No; he is invigorated and inspirited by his leader, in order that he may exert himself; for he cannot proceed in quiescence, he cannot be carried like a dead weight. Therefore to create taste is to call forth and bestow power, of which knowledge is the effect; and *there* lies the true difficulty.

As the pathetic participates of an *animal* sensation, it might seem—that if the springs of this emotion were genuine, all men, possessed of competent knowledge of the facts and circumstances, would be instantaneously affected. And, doubtless, in the works of every true poet will be found passages of that species of excellence, which is proved by effects immediate and universal. But there are emotions of the pathetic that are simple and direct, and others—that are complex and revolutionary; some—to which the heart yields with gentleness; others—against which it struggles with pride; these varieties are infinite as the combinations of circumstance and the constitutions of character. Remember, also, that the medium through which, in poetry, the heart is to be affected, is language; a thing subject to endless fluctuations and arbitrary associations. The genius of the poet melts these down for his purpose; but they retain their shape and quality to him who is not capable of exerting, within his own mind, a corresponding energy.

There is also a meditative, as well as a human pathos ; an enthusiastic, as well as an ordinary sorrow ; a sadness that has its seat in the depths of reason, to which the mind cannot sink gently of itself—but to which it must descend by treading the steps of thought. And for the sublime, —if we consider what are the cares that occupy the passing day, and how remote is the practice and the course of life from the sources of sublimity, in the soul of Man, can it be wondered that there is little existing preparation for a poet charged with a new mission to extend its kingdom, and to augment and spread its enjoyments?

Away, then, with the senseless iteration of the word *popular*, applied to new works in poetry, as if there were no test of excellence in this first of the fine arts but that all men should run after its productions, as if urged by an appetite, or constrained by a spell !—The qualities of writing best fitted for eager reception are either such as startle the world into attention by their audacity and extravagance ; or they are chiefly of a superficial kind, lying upon the surfaces of manners ; or arising out of a selection and arrangement of incidents, by which the mind is kept upon the stretch of curiosity, and the fancy amused without the trouble of thought. But in everything which is to send the soul into herself to be admonished of her weakness, or to be made conscious of her power ;—wherever life and nature are described as operated upon by the creative or abstracting virtue of the imagination ; wherever the instinctive wisdom of antiquity and her heroic passions uniting, in the heart of the poet, with the meditative wisdom of later ages, have produced that accord of sublimated humanity, which is at once a history of the remote past and a prophetic enunciation of the remotest future, *there*, the poet must reconcile himself for a season to few and scattered hearers.—Grand thoughts (and Shakspeare must often have sighed over this truth), as they are most naturally and most fitly conceived in solitude, so can they not be brought forth in the midst of plaudits, without some violation of their sanctity. Go to a silent exhibition of the productions of the sister Art, and be convinced that the qualities which dazzle at first sight, and kindle the admiration of the multitude, are essentially different from those by which permanent influence is secured. Let us not shrink from following up these principles as far as they will carry us, and conclude with observing—that there never has been a period, and perhaps never will be, in which vicious poetry, of some kind or other, has not excited more zealous admiration, and been far more generally read, than good ; but this advantage attends the good, that the *individual*, as well as the species, survives from age to age ; whereas, of the depraved, though the species be immortal, the individual quickly *perishes* ; the object of present admiration vanishes, being supplanted by some other as easily produced ; which, though no better, brings with it at least the irritation of novelty,—with adaptation, more or less skilful, to the changing humours of the majority of those who are most at leisure to regard poetical works when they first solicit their attention.

Is it the result of the whole, that, in the opinion of the Writer, the judgment of the People is not to be respected ? The thought is most injurious ; and, could the charge be brought against him, he would repel it with indignation. The People have already been justified, and their eulogium pronounced by implication, when it was said, above—that, of *good* poetry, the *individual*, as well as the species, *survives*. And how does it survive but through the People ? What preserves it but their intellect and their wisdom ?

'—Past and future, are the wings
On whose support, harmoniously conjoined,
Moves the great Spirit of human knowledge—'

MS.

The voice that issues from this Spirit, is that *Vox Populi* which the Deity inspires. Foolish must he be who can mistake for this a local acclamation, or a transitory outcry—transitory though it be for years, local though from a Nation. Still more lamentable is his error who can believe that there is anything of divine infallibility in the clamour of that small though loud portion of the community, ever governed by factitious influence, which, under the name of the *PUBLIC*, passes itself, upon the unthinking, for the *PEOPLE*. Towards the Public, the Writer hopes that he feels as much deference as it is entitled to: but to the People, philosophically characterised, and to the embodied spirit of their knowledge, so far as it exists and moves, at the present, faithfully supported by its two wings, the past and the future, his devout respect, his reverence, is due. He offers it willingly and readily; and, this done, takes leave of his Readers, by assuring them—that, if he were not persuaded that the contents of these Volumes, and the Work to which they are subsidiary, evince something of the 'Vision and the Faculty divine'; and that, both in words and things, they will operate in their degree, to extend the domain of sensibility for the delight, the honour, and the benefit of human nature, notwithstanding the many happy hours which he has employed in their composition, and the manifold comforts and enjoyments they have procured to him, he would not, if a wish could do it, save them from immediate destruction;—from becoming at this moment, to the world, as a thing that had never been.

1815

DEDICATION

PREFIXED TO THE EDITION OF 1815

TO SIR GEORGE HOWLAND BEAUMONT, BART.

MY DEAR SIR GEORGE,—Accept my thanks for the permission given me to dedicate these Volumes to you. In addition to a lively pleasure derived from general considerations, I feel a particular satisfaction; for, by inscribing these Poems with your Name, I seem to myself in some degree to repay, by an appropriate honour, the great obligation which I owe to one part of the Collection—as having been the means of first making us personally known to each other. Upon much of the remainder, also, you have a peculiar claim,—for some of the best pieces were composed under the shade of your own groves, upon the classic ground of Coleorton; where I was animated by the recollection of those illustrious Poets of your name and family, who were born in that neighbourhood; and, we may be assured, did not wander with indifference by the dashing stream of Grace Dieu, and among the rocks that diversify the forest of Charnwood.—Nor is there any one to whom such parts of this Collection as have been inspired or coloured by the beautiful Country from which I now address you, could be presented with more propriety than to yourself—to whom it has suggested so many admirable pictures. Early in life, the

sublimity and beauty of this region excited your admiration ; and I know that you are bound to it in mind by a still strengthening attachment.

Wishing and hoping that this Work, with the embellishments it has received from your pencil,¹ may survive as a lasting memorial of a friendship, which I reckon among the blessings of my life,—I have the honour to be, My dear Sir George, Yours most affectionately and faithfully,

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

RYDAL MOUNT, WESTMORELAND
February 1, 1815

PREFACE TO THE EDITION OF 1815

THE powers requisite for the production of poetry are: first, those of Observation and Description,—i.e. the ability to observe with accuracy things as they are in themselves, and with fidelity to describe them, unmodified by any passion or feeling existing in the mind of the describer ; whether the things depicted be actually present to the senses, or have a place only in the memory. This power, though indispensable to a Poet, is one which he employs only in submission to necessity, and never for a continuance of time : as its exercise supposes all the higher qualities of the mind to be passive, and in a state of subjection to external objects, much in the same way as a translator or engraver ought to be to his original. 2ndly, Sensibility,—which, the more exquisite it is, the wider will be the range of a poet's perceptions ; and the more will he be incited to observe objects, both as they exist in themselves and as re-acted upon by his own mind. (The distinction between poetic and human sensibility has been marked in the character of the Poet delineated in the original preface.) 3rdly, Reflection,—which makes the Poet acquainted with the value of actions, images, thoughts, and feelings ; and assists the sensibility in perceiving their connection with each other. 4thly, Imagination and Fancy,—to modify, to create, and to associate. 5thly, Invention,—by which characters are composed out of materials supplied by observation ; whether of the Poet's own heart and mind, or of external life and nature ; and such incidents and situations produced as are most impressive to the imagination, and most fitted to do justice to the characters, sentiments, and passions, which the Poet undertakes to illustrate. And, lastly, Judgment,—to decide how and where, and in what degree, each of these faculties ought to be exerted ; so that the less shall not be sacrificed to the greater ; nor the greater, slighting the less, arrogate, to its own injury, more than its due. By judgment, also, is determined what are the laws and appropriate graces of every species of composition.²

The materials of Poetry, by these powers collected and produced, are cast, by means of various moulds, into divers forms. The moulds may be enumerated, and the forms specified, in the following order. 1st, The Narrative,—including the Epopœia, the Historic Poem, the Tale, the Romance, the Mock-heroic, and, if the spirit of Homer will tolerate such neighbourhood, that dear production of our days, the metrical Novel.

¹ The state of the plates has, for some time, not allowed them to be repeated.

² As sensibility to harmony of numbers, and the power of producing it, are invariably attendants upon the faculties above specified, nothing has been said upon those requisites.

Of this Class, the distinguishing mark is, that the Narrator, however liberally his speaking agents be introduced, is himself the source from which everything primarily flows. Epic Poets, in order that their mode of composition may accord with the elevation of their subject, represent themselves as *singing* from the inspiration of the Muse, ‘*Arma virumque cano*’; but this is a fiction, in modern times, of slight value: the *Iliad* or the *Paradise Lost* would gain little in our estimation by being chanted. The other poets who belong to this class are commonly content to *tell* their tale;—so that of the whole it may be affirmed that they neither require nor reject the accompaniment of music.

2ndly, The Dramatic,—consisting of Tragedy, Historic Drama, Comedy, and Masque, in which the Poet does not appear at all in his person, and where the whole action is carried on by speech and dialogue of the agents; music being admitted only incidentally and rarely. The Opera may be placed here, inasmuch as it proceeds by dialogue; though depending, to the degree that it does, upon music, it has a strong claim to be ranked with the lyrical. The characteristic and impassioned Epistle, of which Ovid and Pope have given examples, considered as a species of monodrama, may, without impropriety, be placed in this class.

3rdly, The Lyrical,—containing the Hymn, the Ode, the Elegy, the Song, and the Ballad; in all which, for the production of their *full* effect, an accompaniment of music is indispensable.

4thly, The Idyllium,—descriptive chiefly either of the processes and appearances of external nature, as *The Seasons* of Thomson; or of characters, manners, and sentiments, as are Shenstone’s *Schoolmistress*, *The Cotter’s Saturday Night* of Burns, *The Two Dogs* of the same Author; or of these in conjunction with the appearances of Nature, as most of the pieces of Theocritus, the *Allegro* and *Penseroso* of Milton, Beattie’s *Minstrel*, Goldsmith’s *Deserted Village*. The Epitaph, the Inscription, the Sonnet, most of the epistles of poets writing in their own persons, and all loco-descriptive poetry, belong to this class.

5thly, Didactic,—the principal object of which is direct instruction: as the Poem of Lucretius, the *Georgics* of Virgil, *The Fleece* of Dyer, Mason’s *English Garden*, etc.

And, lastly, philosophical Satire, like that of Horace and Juvenal; personal and occasional Satire rarely comprehending sufficient of the general in the individual to be dignified with the name of poetry.

Out of the three last has been constructed a composite order, of which Young’s *Night Thoughts*, and Cowper’s *Task*, are excellent examples.

It is deducible from the above, that poems, apparently miscellaneous, may with propriety be arranged either with reference to the powers of mind *predominant* in the production of them; or to the mould in which they are cast; or, lastly, to the subjects to which they relate. From each of these considerations, the following Poems have been divided into classes; which, that the work may more obviously correspond with the course of human life, and for the sake of exhibiting in it the three requisites of a legitimate whole, a beginning, a middle, and an end, have been also arranged, as far as it was possible, according to an order of time, commencing with Childhood, and terminating with Old Age, Death, and Immortality. My guiding wish was, that the small pieces of which these volumes consist, thus discriminated, might be regarded under a

two-fold view ; as composing an entire work within themselves, and as adjuncts to the philosophical Poem, *The Recluse*. This arrangement has long presented itself habitually to my own mind. Nevertheless, I should have preferred to scatter the contents of these volumes at random, if I had been persuaded that, by the plan adopted, anything material would be taken from the natural effect of the pieces, individually, on the mind of the unreflecting Reader. I trust there is a sufficient variety in each class to prevent this ; while, for him who reads with reflection, the arrangement will serve as a commentary unostentatiously directing his attention to my purposes, both particular and general. But, as I wish to guard against the possibility of misleading by this classification, it is proper first to remind the Reader, that certain poems are placed according to the powers of mind, in the Author's conception, predominant in the production of them ; *predominant*, which implies the exertion of other faculties in less degree. Where there is more imagination than fancy in a poem, it is placed under the head of imagination, and *vice versâ*. Both the above classes might without impropriety have been enlarged from that consisting of 'Poems founded on the Affections' ; as might this latter from those, and from the class 'proceeding from Sentiment and Reflection.' The most striking characteristics of each piece, mutual illustration, variety, and proportion, have governed me throughout.

None of the other Classes, except those of Fancy and Imagination, require any particular notice. But a remark of general application may be made. All Poets, except the dramatic, have been in the practice of feigning that their works were composed to the music of the harp or lyre : with what degree of affectation this has been done in modern times, I leave to the judicious to determine. For my own part, I have not been disposed to violate probability so far, or to make such a large demand upon the Reader's charity. Some of these pieces are essentially lyrical ; and, therefore, cannot have their due force without a supposed musical accompaniment ; but, in much the greatest part, as a substitute for the classic lyre or romantic harp, I require nothing more than an animated or impassioned recitation, adapted to the subject. Poems, however humble in their kind, if they be good in that kind, cannot read themselves ; the law of long syllable and short must not be so inflexible,—the letter of metre must not be so impassive to the spirit of versification,—as to deprive the Reader of all voluntary power to modulate, in subordination to the sense, the music of the poem ;—in the same manner as his mind is left at liberty, and even summoned, to act upon its thoughts and images. But, though the accompaniment of a musical instrument be frequently dispensed with, the true Poet does not therefore abandon his privilege distinct from that of the mere Proseman ;

'He murmurs near the running brooks
A music sweeter than their own.'

Let us come now to the consideration of the words Fancy and Imagination, as employed in the classification of the following Poems. 'A man,' says an intelligent author, 'has imagination in proportion as he can distinctly copy in idea the impressions of sense: it is the faculty which *images* within the mind the phenomena of sensation. A man has fancy in proportion as he can call up, connect, or associate, at pleasure, those internal images (*φαντάζειν* is to cause to appear) so as to complete

ideal representations of absent objects. Imagination is the power of depicting, and fancy of evoking and combining. The imagination is formed by patient observation; the fancy by a voluntary activity in shifting the scenery of the mind. The more accurate the imagination, the more safely may a painter, or a poet, undertake a delineation, or a description, without the presence of the objects to be characterised. The more versatile the fancy, the more original and striking will be the decorations produced.'—*British Synonyms discriminated*, by W. Taylor.

Is not this as if a man should undertake to supply an account of a building, and be so intent upon what he had discovered of the foundation, as to conclude his task without once looking up at the superstructure? Here, as in other instances throughout the volume, the judicious Author's mind is enthralled by Etymology; he takes up the original word as his guide and escort, and too often does not perceive how soon he becomes its prisoner, without liberty to tread in any path but that to which it confines him. It is not easy to find out how imagination, thus explained, differs from distinct remembrance of images; or fancy from quick and vivid recollection of them: each is nothing more than a mode of memory. If the two words bear the above meaning, and no other, what term is left to designate that faculty of which the Poet is 'all compact'; he whose eye glances from earth to heaven, whose spiritual attributes body forth what his pen is prompt in turning to shape; or what is left to characterise Fancy, as insinuating herself into the heart of objects with creative activity?—Imagination, in the sense of the word as giving title to a class of the following Poems, has no reference to images that are merely a faithful copy, existing in the mind, of absent external objects; but is a word of higher import, denoting operations of the mind upon those objects, and processes of creation or of composition, governed by certain fixed laws. I proceed to illustrate my meaning by instances. A parrot *hangs* from the wires of his cage by his beak or by his claws; or a monkey from the bough of a tree by his paws or his tail. Each creature does so literally and actually. In the first Eclogue of Virgil, the shepherd, thinking of the time when he is to take leave of his farm, thus addresses his goats:—

'Non ego vos posthac viridi projectus in antro
Dumosa pendere procul de rupe videbo.'

—— 'half way down
Hangs one who gathers samphire,'

is the well-known expression of Shakspeare, delineating an ordinary image upon the cliffs of Dover. In these two instances is a slight exertion of the faculty which I denominate imagination, in the use of one word: neither the goats nor the samphire-gatherer do literally hang, as does the parrot or the monkey; but, presenting to the senses something of such an appearance, the mind in its activity, for its own gratification, contemplates them as hanging.

'As when far off at sea a fleet descried
Hangs in the clouds, by equinoctial winds
Close sailing from Bengala, or the isles
Of Ternate or Tidore, whence merchants bring
Their spicy drugs; they on the trading flood
Through the wide Ethiopian to the Cape
Ply, stemming nightly toward the Pole: so seemed
Far off the flying Fiend.'

Here is the full strength of the imagination involved in the word *hangs*, and exerted upon the whole image : First, the fleet, an aggregate of many ships, is represented as one mighty person, whose track, we know and feel, is upon the waters ; but, taking advantage of its appearance to the senses, the Poet dares to represent it as *hanging in the clouds*, both for the gratification of the mind in contemplating the image itself, and in reference to the motion and appearance of the sublime objects to which it is compared.

From impressions of sight we will pass to those of sound ; which, as they must necessarily be of a less definite character, shall be selected from these volumes :

‘Over his own sweet voice the Stock-dove broods’;

of the same bird,

‘His voice was *buried* among trees,
Yet to be come at by the breeze’;

‘O, Cuckoo ! shall I call thee *Bird*,
Or but a wandering *Voice*?’

The stock-dove is said to *coo*, a sound well imitating the note of the bird ; but, by the intervention of the metaphor *broods*, the affections are called in by the imagination to assist in marking the manner in which the bird reiterates and prolongs her soft note, as if herself delighting to listen to it, and participating of a still and quiet satisfaction, like that which may be supposed inseparable from the continuous process of incubation. ‘His voice was buried among trees,’ a metaphor expressing the love of *seclusion* by which this Bird is marked ; and characterising its note as not partaking of the shrill and the piercing, and therefore more easily deadened by the intervening shade ; yet a note so peculiar and withal so pleasing, that the breeze, gifted with that love of the sound which the Poet feels, penetrates the shades in which it is entombed, and conveys it to the ear of the listener.

‘Shall I call thee Bird,
Or but a wandering Voice ?’

This concise interrogation characterises the seeming ubiquity of the voice of the cuckoo, and dispossesses the creature almost of a corporeal existence ; the Imagination being tempted to this exertion of her power by a consciousness in the memory that the cuckoo is almost perpetually heard throughout the season of spring, but seldom becomes an object of sight.

Thus far of images independent of each other, and immediately endowed by the mind with properties that do not inhere in them, upon an incitement from properties and qualities the existence of which is inherent and obvious. These processes of imagination are carried on either by conferring additional properties upon an object, or abstracting from it some of those which it actually possesses, and thus enabling it to re-act upon the mind which hath performed the process, like a new existence.

I pass from the Imagination acting upon an individual image to a con-

sideration of the same faculty employed upon images in a conjunction by which they modify each other. The Reader has already had a fine instance before him in the passage quoted from Virgil, where the apparently perilous situation of the goat, hanging upon the shaggy precipice, is contrasted with that of the shepherd contemplating it from the seclusion of the cavern in which he lies stretched at ease and in security. Take these images separately, and how unaffecting the picture compared with that produced by their being thus connected with, and opposed to, each other !

‘As a huge stone is sometimes seen to lie
Couched on the bald top of an eminence,
Wonder to all who do the same espy
By what means it could thither come, and whence,
So that it seems a thing indued with sense,
Like a sea-beast crawled forth, which on a shelf
Of rock or sand reposes, there to sun himself.

Such seemed this Man ; not all alive or dead
Nor all asleep, in his extreme old age.

Motionless as a cloud the old Man stood,
That heareth not the loud winds when they call,
And moveth altogether if it move at all.’

In these images, the conferring, the abstracting, and the modifying powers of the Imagination, immediately and mediately acting, are all brought into conjunction. The stone is endowed with something of the power of life to approximate it to the sea-beast ; and the sea-beast stripped of some of its vital qualities to assimilate it to the stone ; which intermediate image is thus treated for the purpose of bringing the original image, that of the stone, to a nearer resemblance to the figure and condition of the aged Man ; who is divested of so much of the indications of life and motion as to bring him to the point where the two objects unite and coalesce in just comparison. After what has been said, the image of the cloud need not be commented upon.

Thus far of an endowing or modifying power : but the Imagination also shapes and *creates* ; and how ? By innumerable processes ; and in none does it more delight than in that of consolidating numbers into unity, and dissolving and separating unity into number,—alternations proceeding from, and governed by, a sublime consciousness of the soul in her own mighty and almost divine powers. Recur to the passage already cited from Milton. When the compact Fleet, as one Person, has been introduced ‘sailing from Bengala,’ ‘They,’ *i.e.* the ‘merchants,’ representing the fleet resolved into a multitude of ships, ‘ply’ their voyage towards the extremities of the earth : ‘So’ (referring to the word ‘As’ in the commencement) ‘seemed the flying Fiend’ ; the image of his Person acting to recombine the multitude of ships into one body,—the point from which the comparison set out. ‘So seemed,’ and to whom seemed ? To the heavenly Muse who dictates the poem, to the eye of the Poet’s mind, and to that of the Reader, present at one moment in the wide Ethiopian, and the next in the solitudes, then first broken in upon, of the infernal regions !

‘Modo me Thebis, modo ponit Athenis.’

Hear again this mighty Poet,—speaking of the Messiah going forth to expel from heaven the rebellious angels,

‘Attended by ten thousand thousand Saints
He onward came : far off his coming shone,’—

the retinue of Saints, and the Person of the Messiah himself, lost almost and merged in the splendour of that indefinite abstraction ‘His coming!’

As I do not mean here to treat this subject further than to throw some light upon the present Volumes, and especially upon one division of them, I shall spare myself and the Reader the trouble of considering the Imagination as it deals with thoughts and sentiments, as it regulates the composition of characters, and determines the course of actions: I will not consider it (more than I have already done by implication) as that power which, in the language of one of my most esteemed Friends, ‘draws all things to one; which makes things animate or inanimate, beings with their attributes, subjects with their accessories, take one colour and serve to one effect.’¹ The grand store-houses of enthusiastic and meditative Imagination, of poetical, as contra-distinguished from human and dramatic Imagination, are the prophetic and lyrical parts of the Holy Scriptures, and the works of Milton; to which I cannot forbear to add those of Spenser. I select these writers in preference to those of ancient Greece and Rome, because the anthropomorphism of the Pagan religion subjected the minds of the greatest poets in those countries too much to the bondage of definite form; from which the Hebrews were preserved by their abhorrence of idolatry. This abhorrence was almost as strong in our great epic Poet, both from circumstances of his life, and from the constitution of his mind. However imbued the surface might be with classical literature, he was a Hebrew in soul; and all things tended in him towards the sublime. Spenser, of a gentler nature, maintained his freedom by aid of his allegorical spirit, at one time inciting him to create persons out of abstractions; and, at another, by a superior effort of genius, to give the universality and permanence of abstractions to his human beings, by means of attributes and emblems that belong to the highest moral truths and the purest sensations,—of which his character of *Una* is a glorious example. Of the human and dramatic Imagination the works of Shakspeare are an inexhaustible source.

‘I tax not you, ye Elements, with unkindness,
I never gave you kingdoms, call’d you Daughters!’

And if, bearing in mind the many Poets distinguished by this prime quality, whose names I omit to mention; yet justified by recollection of the insults which the ignorant, the incapable, and the presumptuous, have heaped upon these and my other writings, I may be permitted to anticipate the judgment of posterity upon myself, I shall declare (censurable, I grant, if the notoriety of the fact above stated does not justify me) that I have given in these unfavourable times, evidence of exertions of this faculty upon its worthiest objects, the external universe, the moral and religious sentiments of Man, his natural affections, and his acquired passions; which have the same ennobling tendency as the productions of men, in this kind, worthy to be holden in undying remembrance.

¹ Charles Lamb upon the genius of Hogarth.

To the mode in which Fancy has already been characterised as the power of evoking and combining, or, as my friend Mr. Coleridge has styled it, 'the aggregative and associative power,' my objection is only that the definition is too general. To aggregate and to associate, to evoke and to combine, belong as well to the Imagination as to the Fancy; but either the materials evoked and combined are different; or they are brought together under a different law, and for a different purpose. Fancy does not require that the materials which she makes use of should be susceptible of change in their constitution, from her touch; and, where they admit of modification, it is enough for her purpose if it be slight, limited, and evanescent. Directly the reverse of these, are the desires and demands of the Imagination. She recoils from everything but the plastic, the pliant, and the indefinite. She leaves it to Fancy to describe Queen Mab as coming,

'In shape no bigger than an agate-stone
On the fore-finger of an alderman.'

Having to speak of stature, she does not tell you that her gigantic Angel was as tall as Pompey's Pillar; much less that he was twelve cubits, or twelve hundred cubits high; or that his dimensions equalled those of Teneriffe or Atlas;—because these, and if they were a million times as high it would be the same, are bounded: The expression is, 'His stature reached the sky!' the illimitable firmament!—When the Imagination frames a comparison, if it does not strike on the first presentation, a sense of the truth of the likeness, from the moment that it is perceived, grows—and continues to grow—upon the mind; the resemblance depending less upon outline of form and feature, than upon expression and effect; less upon casual and outstanding, than upon inherent and internal, properties: moreover, the images invariably modify each other.—The law under which the processes of Fancy are carried on is as capricious as the accidents of things, and the effects are surprising, playful, ludicrous, amusing, tender, or pathetic, as the objects happen to be appositely produced or fortunately combined. Fancy depends upon the rapidity and profusion with which she scatters her thoughts and images; trusting that their number, and the felicity with which they are linked together, will make amends for the want of individual value: or she prides herself upon the curious subtilty and the successful elaboration with which she can detect their lurking affinities. If she can win you over to her purpose, and impart to you her feelings, she cares not how unstable or transitory may be her influence, knowing that it will not be out of her power to resume it upon an apt occasion. But the Imagination is conscious of an indestructible dominion;—the Soul may fall away from it, not being able to sustain its grandeur; but if once felt and acknowledged, by no act of any other faculty of the mind can it be relaxed, impaired, or diminished.—Fancy is given to quicken and to beguile the temporal part of our nature, Imagination to incite and to support the eternal.—Yet is it not the less true that Fancy, as she is an active, is also, under her own laws and in her own spirit, a creative faculty. In what manner Fancy ambitiously aims at a rivalry with Imagination, and Imagination stoops to work with the materials of Fancy, might be illustrated from the compositions of all eloquent writers, whether in prose or verse; and chiefly from those of our own Country. Scarcely a page of the impassioned parts of Bishop Taylor's Works can

be opened that shall not afford examples.—Referring the Reader to those inestimable volumes, I will content myself with placing a conceit (ascribed to Lord Chesterfield) in contrast with a passage from the *Paradise Lost* :—

‘The dews of the evening most carefully shun,
They are the tears of the sky for the loss of the sun.’

After the transgression of Adam, Milton, with other appearances of sympathising Nature, thus marks the immediate consequence,

‘Sky lowered, and, muttering thunder, some sad drops
Wept at completion of the mortal sin.’

The associating link is the same in each instance : Dew and rain, not distinguishable from the liquid substance of tears, are employed as indications of sorrow. A flash of surprise is the effect in the former case ; a flash of surprise, and nothing more ; for the nature of things does not sustain the combination. In the latter, the effects from the act, of which there is this immediate consequence and visible sign, are so momentous, that the mind acknowledges the justice and reasonableness of the sympathy in nature so manifested ; and the sky weeps drops of water as if with human eyes, as ‘Earth had before trembled from her entrails, and Nature given a second groan.’

Finally, I will refer to Cotton’s *Ode upon Winter*, an admirable composition, though stained with some peculiarities of the age in which he lived, for a general illustration of the characteristics of Fancy. The middle part of this ode contains a most lively description of the entrance of Winter, with his retinue, as ‘A palsied king,’ and yet a military monarch,—advancing for conquest with his army ; the several bodies of which, and their arms and equipments, are described with a rapidity of detail, and a profusion of *fanciful* comparisons, which indicate on the part of the poet extreme activity of intellect, and a correspondent hurry of delightful feeling. Winter retires from the foe into the fortress, where

——— ‘a magazine
Of sovereign juice is cellared in ;
Liquor that will the siege maintain,
Should Phœbus ne’er return again.’

Though myself a water-drinker, I cannot resist the pleasure of transcribing what follows, as an instance still more happy of Fancy employed in the treatment of feeling than, in its preceding passages, the Poem supplies of her management of forms.

‘Tis that, that gives the poet rage,
And thaws the gelid blood of age ;
Matures the young, restores the old,
And makes the fainting coward bold.

It lays the careful head to rest,
Calms palpitations in the breast,
Renders our lives’ misfortune sweet ;
.

Then let the chill Sirocco blow,
And gird us round with hills of snow,
Or else go whistle to the shore,
And make the hollow mountains roar,

Whilst we together jovial sit
 Careless, and crowned with mirth and wit,
 Where, though bleak winds confine us home,
 Our fancies round the world shall roam.

We'll think of all the Friends we know,
 And drink to all worth drinking to ;
 When having drunk all thine and mine,
 We rather shall want healths than wine,

But where Friends fail us, we'll supply
 Our friendships with our charity ;
 Men that remote in sorrows live,
 Shall by our lusty brimmers thrive.

We'll drink the wanting into wealth,
 And those that languish into health,
 The afflicted into joy ; th' opprest
 Into security and rest.

The worthy in disgrace shall find
 Favour return again more kind,
 And in restraint who stifled lie,
 Shall taste the air of liberty.

The brave shall triumph in success,
 The lover shall have mistresses,
 Poor unregarded Virtue, praise,
 And the neglected Poet, bays.

Thus shall our healths do others good,
 Whilst we ourselves do all we would ;
 For, freed from envy and from care,
 What would we be but what we are ?'

When I sate down to write this Preface, it was my intention to have made it more comprehensive ; but, thinking that I ought rather to apologise for detaining the reader so long, I will here conclude.

POSTSCRIPT. 1835

IN the present volume, as in those that have preceded it, the reader will have found occasionally opinions expressed upon the course of public affairs, and feelings given vent to as national interests excited them. Since nothing, I trust, has been uttered but in the spirit of reflective patriotism, those notices are left to produce their own effect ; but, among the many objects of general concern, and the changes going forward, which I have glanced at in verse, are some especially affecting the lower orders of society ; in reference to these, I wish here to add a few words in plain prose.

Were I conscious of being able to do justice to those important topics, I might avail myself of the periodical press for offering anonymously my thoughts, such as they are, to the world ; but I feel that, in procuring attention, they may derive some advantage, however small, from my name, in addition to that of being presented in a less fugitive shape. It is also not impossible that the state of mind which some of the foregoing

poems may have produced in the reader, will dispose him to receive more readily the impression which I desire to make, and to admit the conclusions I would establish.

I. The first thing that presses upon my attention is the Poor-Law Amendment Act. I am aware of the magnitude and complexity of the subject, and the unwearied attention which it has received from men of far wider experience than my own; yet I cannot forbear touching upon one point of it, and to this I will confine myself, though not insensible to the objection which may reasonably be brought against treating a portion of this, or any other, great scheme of civil polity separately from the whole. The point to which I wish to draw the reader's attention is, that *all* persons who cannot find employment, or procure wages sufficient to support the body in health and strength, are entitled to a maintenance by law.

This dictate of humanity is acknowledged in the Report of the Commissioners; but is there not room for apprehension that some of the regulations of the new act have a tendency to render the principle nugatory by difficulties thrown in the way of applying it? If this be so, persons will not be wanting to show it, by examining the provisions of the act in detail,—an attempt which would be quite out of place here; but it will not, therefore, be deemed unbecoming in one who fears that the prudence of the head may, in framing some of those provisions, have supplanted the wisdom of the heart, to enforce a principle which cannot be violated without infringing upon one of the most precious rights of the English people, and opposing one of the most sacred claims of civilised humanity.

There can be no greater error, in this department of legislation, than the belief that this principle does by necessity operate for the degradation of those who claim, or are so circumstanced as to make it likely they may claim, through laws founded upon it, relief or assistance. The direct contrary is the truth: it may be unanswerably maintained that its tendency is to raise, not to depress; by stamping a value upon life, which can belong to it only where the laws have placed men who are willing to work, and yet cannot find employment, above the necessity of looking for protection against hunger and other natural evils, either to individual and casual charity, to despair and death, or to the breach of law by theft, or violence.

And here, as in the Report of the Commissioners the fundamental principle has been recognised, I am not at issue with them any farther than I am compelled to believe that their 'remedial measures' obstruct the application of it more than the interests of society require.

And, calling to mind the doctrines of political economy which are now prevalent, I cannot forbear to enforce the justice of the principle, and to insist upon its salutary operation.

And first for its justice: If self-preservation be the first law of our nature, would not every one in a state of nature be morally justified in taking to himself that which is indispensable to such preservation, where by so doing, he would not rob another of that which might be equally indispensable to *his* preservation? And if the value of life be regarded in a right point of view, may it not be questioned whether this right of preserving life, at any expense short of endangering the life of another, does not survive man's entering into the social state; whether this right can be surrendered or forfeited, except when it opposes the divine law,

shown that it was not required, or in bestowing it in undue measure, will be urged by no truly enlightened statesman, as a sufficient reason for banishing the principle itself from legislation.

Let us recur to the miserable states of consciousness that it precludes.

There is a story told, by a traveller in Spain, of a female who, by a sudden shock of domestic calamity, was driven out of her senses, and ever after looked up incessantly to the sky, feeling that her fellow-creatures could do nothing for her relief. Can there be Englishmen who, with a good end in view, would, upon system, expose their brother Englishmen to a like necessity of looking upwards only; or downwards to the earth, after it shall contain no spot where the destitute can demand, by civil right, what by right of nature they are entitled to?

Suppose the objects of our sympathy not sunk into this blank despair, but wandering about as strangers in streets and ways, with the hope of succour from casual charity; what have we gained by such a change of scene? Woful is the condition of the famished Northern Indian, dependent, among winter snows, upon the chance-passage of a herd of deer, from which one, if brought down by his rifle-gun, may be made the means of keeping him and his companions alive. As miserable is that of some savage Islander, who, when the land has ceased to afford him sustenance, watches for food which the waves may cast up, or in vain endeavours to extract it from the inexorable deep. But neither of these is in a state of wretchedness comparable to that, which is so often endured in civilised society: multitudes, in all ages, have known it, of whom may be said:—

‘Homeless, near a thousand homes they stood,
And near a thousand tables pined, and wanted food.’

Justly might I be accused of wasting time in an uncalled-for attempt to excite the feelings of the reader, if systems of political economy, widely spread, did not impugn the principle, and if the safeguards against such extremities were left unimpaired. It is broadly asserted by many, that every man who endeavours to find work, *may* find it: were this assertion capable of being verified, there still would remain a question, what kind of work, and how far may the labourer be fit for it? For if sedentary work is to be exchanged for standing; and some light and nice exercise of the fingers, to which an artisan has been accustomed all his life, for severe labour of the arms; the best efforts would turn to little account, and occasion would be given for the unthinking and the unfeeling unwarrantably to reproach those who are put upon such employment, as idle, froward, and unworthy of relief, either by law or in any other way! Were this statement correct, there would indeed be an end of the argument, the principle here maintained would be superseded. But alas! it is far otherwise. That principle, applicable to the benefit of all countries, is indispensable for England, upon whose coast families are perpetually deprived of their support by shipwreck, and where large masses of men are so liable to be thrown out of their ordinary means of gaining bread, by changes in commercial intercourse, subject mainly or solely to the will of foreign powers; by new discoveries in arts and manufactures; and by reckless laws, in conformity with theories of political economy, which, whether right or wrong in the abstract, have proved a scourge to tens of thousands, by the abruptness with which they have been carried into practice.

But it is urged,—refuse altogether compulsory relief to the able-bodied, and the number of those who stand in need of relief will steadily diminish through a conviction of an absolute necessity for greater forethought, and more prudent care of a man's earnings. Undoubtedly it would, but so also would it, and in a much greater degree, if the legislative provisions were retained, and parochial relief administered under the care of the upper classes, as it ought to be. For it has been invariably found, that wherever the funds have been raised and applied under the superintendence of gentlemen and substantial proprietors, acting in vestries, and as overseers, pauperism has diminished accordingly. Proper care in that quarter would effectually check what is felt in some districts to be one of the worst evils in the poor-law system, viz. the readiness of small and needy proprietors to join in imposing rates that seemingly subject them to great hardships, while, in fact, this is done with a mutual understanding, that the relief each is ready to bestow upon his still poorer neighbours will be granted to himself, or his relatives, should it hereafter be applied for.

But let us look to inner sentiments of a nobler quality, in order to know what we have to build upon. Affecting proofs occur in every one's experience, who is acquainted with the unfortunate and the indigent, of their unwillingness to derive their subsistence from aught but their own funds or labour, or to be indebted to parochial assistance for the attainment of any object, however dear to them. A case was reported, the other day, from a coroner's inquest, of a pair who, through the space of four years, had carried about their dead infant from house to house, and from lodging to lodging, as their necessities drove them, rather than ask the parish to bear the expense of its interment:—the poor creatures lived in the hope of one day being able to bury the child at their own cost. It must have been heart-rending to see and hear the mother, who had been called upon to account for the state in which the body was found, make this deposition. By some, judging coldly, if not harshly, this conduct might be imputed to an unwarrantable pride, as she and her husband had, it is true, been once in prosperity. But examples, where the spirit of independence works with equal strength, though not with like miserable accompaniments, are frequently to be found even yet among the humblest peasantry and mechanics. There is not, then, sufficient cause for doubting that a like sense of honour may be revived among the people, and their ancient habits of independence restored, without resorting to those severities which the new Poor-Law Act has introduced.

But even if the surfaces of things only are to be examined, we have a right to expect that law-givers should take into account the various tempers and dispositions of mankind: while some are led, by the existence of a legislative provision, into idleness and extravagance, the economical virtues might be cherished in others by the knowledge that, if all their efforts fail, they have in the Poor Laws a 'refuge from the storm and a shadow from the heat.' Despondency and distraction are no friends to prudence: the springs of industry will relax, if cheerfulness be destroyed by anxiety; without hope men become reckless, and have a sullen pride in adding to the heap of their own wretchedness. He who feels that he is abandoned by his fellow-men will be almost irresistibly driven to care little for himself; will lose his self-respect accordingly, and with that loss what remains to him of virtue?

With all due deference to the particular experience, and general

intelligence of the individuals who framed the Act, and of those who in and out of parliament have approved of and supported it; it may be said, that it proceeds too much upon the presumption that it is a labouring man's own fault if he be not, as the phrase is, beforehand with the world. But the most prudent are liable to be thrown back by sickness, cutting them off from labour, and causing to them expense: and who but has observed how distress creeps upon multitudes without misconduct of their own; and merely from a gradual fall in the price of labour, without a correspondent one in the price of provisions; so that men who may have ventured upon the marriage state with a fair prospect of maintaining their families in comfort and happiness, see them reduced to a pittance which no effort of theirs can increase? Let it be remembered, also, that there are thousands with whom vicious habits of expense are not the cause why they do not store up their gains; but they are generous and kind-hearted, and ready to help their kindred and friends; moreover, they have a faith in Providence that those who have been prompt to assist others, will not be left destitute, should they themselves come to need. By acting from these blended feelings, numbers have rendered themselves incapable of standing up against a sudden reverse. Nevertheless, these men, in common with all who have the misfortune to be in want, if many theorists had their wish, would be thrown upon one or other of those three sharp points of condition before adverted to, from which the intervention of law has hitherto saved them.

All that has been said tends to show how the principle contended for makes the gift of life more valuable, and has, it may be hoped, led to the conclusion that its legitimate operation is to make men worthier of that gift: in other words, not to degrade but to exalt human nature. But the subject must not be dismissed without adverting to the indirect influence of the same principle upon the moral sentiments of a people among whom it is embodied in law. In our criminal jurisprudence there is a maxim, deservedly eulogised, that it is better that ten guilty persons should escape, than that one innocent man should suffer; so, also, might it be maintained, with regard to the Poor Laws, that it is better for the interests of humanity among the people at large, that ten undeserving should partake of the funds provided, than that one morally good man, through want of relief, should either have his principles corrupted, or his energies destroyed; than that such a one should either be driven to do wrong, or be cast to the earth in utter hopelessness. In France, the English maxim of criminal jurisprudence is reversed; there, it is deemed better that ten innocent men should suffer, than one guilty escape: in France, there is no universal provision for the poor; and we may judge of the small value set upon human life in the metropolis of that country, by merely noticing the disrespect with which, after death, the body is treated, not by the thoughtless vulgar, but in schools of anatomy, presided over by men allowed to be, in their own art and in physical science, among the most enlightened in the world. In the East, where countries are overrun with population as with a weed, infinitely more respect is shown to the remains of the deceased; and what a bitter mockery is it, that this insensibility should be found where civil polity is so busy in minor regulations, and ostentatiously careful to gratify the luxurious propensities, whether social or intellectual, of the multitude! Irreligion is, no doubt, much concerned with this offensive disrespect, shown to the bodies of the dead in France; but it is mainly

attributable to the state in which so many of the living are left by the absence of compulsory provision for the indigent so humanely established by the law of England.

Sights of abject misery, perpetually recurring, harden the heart of the community. In the perusal of history, and of works of fiction, we are not, indeed, unwilling to have our commiseration excited by such objects of distress as they present to us; but, in the concerns of real life, men know that such emotions are not given to be indulged for their own sakes: there, the conscience declares to them that sympathy must be followed by action; and if there exist a previous conviction that the power to relieve is utterly inadequate to the demand, the eye shrinks from communication with wretchedness, and pity and compassion languish, like any other qualities that are deprived of their natural aliment. Let these considerations be duly weighed by those who trust to the hope that an increase of private charity, with all its advantages of superior discrimination, would more than compensate for the abandonment of those principles, the wisdom of which has been here insisted upon. How discouraging, also, would be the sense of injustice, which could not fail to arise in the minds of the well-disposed, if the burden of supporting the poor, a burden of which the selfish have hitherto by compulsion borne a share, should now, or hereafter, be thrown exclusively upon the benevolent.

By having put an end to the Slave-Trade and Slavery, the British people are exalted in the scale of humanity; and they cannot but feel so, if they look into themselves, and duly consider their relation to God and their fellow-creatures. That was a noble advance; but a retrograde movement will assuredly be made, if ever the principle, which has been here defended, should be either avowedly abandoned or but ostensibly retained.

But after all, there may be little reason to apprehend permanent injury from any experiment that may be tried. On the one side will be human nature rising up in her own defence, and on the other prudential selfishness acting to the same purpose, from a conviction that, without a compulsory provision for the exigencies of the labouring multitude, that degree of ability to regulate the price of labour, which is indispensable for the reasonable interest of arts and manufactures, cannot, in Great Britain, be upheld.

II. In a poem of the foregoing collection, allusion is made to the state of the workmen congregated in manufactories. In order to relieve many of the evils to which that class of society are subject and to establish a better harmony between them and their employers, it would be well to repeal such laws as prevent the formation of joint-stock companies. There are, no doubt, many and great obstacles to the formation and salutary working of these societies, inherent in the mind of those whom they would obviously benefit. But the combinations of masters to keep down, unjustly, the price of labour would be fairly checked by them, as far as they were practicable; they would encourage economy, inasmuch as they would enable a man to draw profits from his savings, by investing them in buildings or machinery for processes of manufacture with which he was habitually connected. His little capital would then be working for him while he was at rest or asleep; he would more clearly perceive the necessity of capital for carrying on great works; he would better learn to respect the larger portions of it in the hands of others; he

would be less tempted to join in unjust combinations ; and, for the sake of his own property, if not for higher reasons, he would be slow to promote local disturbance, or endanger public tranquillity ; he would, at least, be loth to act in that way *knowingly* ; for it is not to be denied that such societies might be nurseries of opinions unfavourable to a mixed constitution of government, like that of Great Britain. The democratic and republican spirit which they might be apt to foster would not, however, be dangerous in itself, but only as it might act without being sufficiently counterbalanced, either by landed proprietorship, or by a Church extending itself so as to embrace an ever-growing and ever-shifting population of mechanics and artisans. But if the tendencies of such societies would be to make the men prosper who might belong to them, rulers and legislators should rejoice in the result, and do their duty to the state by upholding and extending the influence of that Church to which it owes, in so great a measure, its safety, its prosperity, and its glory.

This, in the temper of the present times, may be difficult, but it is become indispensable, since large towns in great numbers have sprung up, and others have increased tenfold, with little or no dependence upon the gentry and the landed proprietors ; and apart from those mitigated feudal institutions, which, till of late, have acted so powerfully upon the composition of the House of Commons. Now it may be affirmed that, in quarters where there is not an attachment to the Church, or the landed aristocracy, and a pride in supporting them, *there* the people will dislike both, and be ready, upon such incitements as are perpetually recurring, to join in attempts to overthrow them. There is no neutral ground here : from want of due attention to the state of society in large towns and manufacturing districts, and ignorance or disregard of these obvious truths, innumerable well-meaning persons became zealous supporters of a Reform Bill, the qualities and powers of which, whether destructive or constructive, they would otherwise have been afraid of ; and even the framers of that bill, swayed as they might be by party resentments and personal ambition, could not have gone so far, had not they too been lamentably ignorant or neglectful of the same truths both of fact and philosophy.

But let that pass ; and let no opponent of the bill be tempted to compliment his own foresight, by exaggerating the mischiefs and dangers that have sprung from it : let not time be wasted in profitless regrets ; and let those party distinctions vanish to their very names that have separated men who, whatever course they may have pursued, have ever had a bond of union in the wish to save the limited monarchy, and those other institutions that have, under Providence, rendered for so long a period of time this country the happiest and worthiest of which there is any record since the foundation of civil society.

III. A philosophic mind is best pleased when looking at religion in its spiritual bearing ; as a guide of conduct, a solace under affliction, and a support amid the instabilities of mortal life : but the Church having been forcibly brought by political considerations to my notice, while treating of the labouring classes, I cannot forbear saying a few words upon that momentous topic.

There is a loud clamour for extensive change in that department. The clamour would be entitled to more respect if they who are the most eager to swell it with their voices were not generally the most ignorant of the real state of the Church, and the service it renders to the

community. *Reform* is the word employed. Let us pause and consider what sense it is apt to carry, and how things are confounded by a lax use of it. The great religious Reformation, in the sixteenth century, did not profess to be a new construction, but a restoration of something fallen into decay, or put out of sight. That familiar and justifiable use of the word seems to have paved the way for fallacies with respect to the term reform, which it is difficult to escape from. Were we to speak of improvement, and the correction of abuses, we should run less risk of being deceived ourselves, or of misleading others. We should be less likely to fall blindly into the belief, that the change demanded is a renewal of something that has existed before, and that, therefore, we have experience on our side; nor should we be equally tempted to beg the question that the change for which we are eager must be advantageous. From generation to generation, men are the dupes of words; and it is painful to observe, that so many of our species are most tenacious of those opinions which they have formed with the least consideration. They who are the readiest to meddle with public affairs, whether in church or state, fly to generalities, that they may be eased from the trouble of thinking about particulars; and thus is deputed to mechanical instrumentality the work which vital knowledge only can do well.

‘Abolish pluralities, have a resident incumbent in every parish,’ is a favourite cry; but, without adverting to other obstacles in the way of this specious scheme, it may be asked what benefit would accrue from its *indiscriminate* adoption to counterbalance the harm it would introduce, by nearly extinguishing the order of curates, unless the revenues of the Church should grow with the population, and be greatly increased in many thinly peopled districts, especially among the parishes of the North.

The order of curates is so beneficial, that some particular notice of it seems to be required in this place. For a Church poor as, relatively to the numbers of people, that of England is, and probably will continue to be, it is no small advantage to have youthful servants, who will work upon the wages of hope and expectation. Still more advantageous is it to have, by means of this order, young men scattered over the country, who being more detached from the temporal concerns of the benefice, have more leisure for improvement and study, and are less subject to be brought into secular collision with those who are under their spiritual guardianship. The curate, if he reside at a distance from the incumbent, undertakes the requisite responsibilities of a temporal kind, in that modified way which prevents him, as a new comer, from being charged with selfishness: while it prepares him for entering upon a benefice of his own, with something of a suitable experience. If he should act under and in co-operation with a resident incumbent, the gain is mutual. His studies will probably be assisted; and his training, managed by a superior, will not be liable to relapse in matters of prudence, seemliness, or in any of the highest cares of his functions; and by way of return for these benefits to the pupil, it will often happen that the zeal of a middle-aged or declining incumbent will be revived, by being in near communion with the ardour of youth, when his own efforts may have languished through a melancholy consciousness that they have not produced as much good among his flock as, when he first entered upon the charge, he fondly hoped.

Let one remark, and that not the least important, be added. A curate,

entering for the first time upon his office, comes from college after a course of expense, and with such inexperience in the use of money, that, in his new situation, he is apt to fall unawares into pecuniary difficulties. If this happens to him, much more likely is it to happen to the youthful incumbent; whose relations, to his parishioners and to society, are more complicated; and, his income being larger and independent of another, a costlier style of living is required of him by public opinion. If embarrassment should ensue, and with that unavoidably some loss of respectability, his future usefulness will be proportionably impaired: not so with the curate, for he can easily remove and start afresh with a stock of experience and an unblemished reputation; whereas the early indiscretions of an incumbent being rarely forgotten, may be impediments to the efficacy of his ministry for the remainder of his life. The same observations would apply with equal force to doctrine. A young minister is liable to errors, from his notions being either too lax or overstrained. In both cases it would prove injurious that the error should be remembered, after study and reflection, with advancing years, shall have brought him to a clearer discernment of the truth, and better judgment in the application of it.

It must be acknowledged that, among the regulations of ecclesiastical polity, none at first view are more attractive than that which prescribes for every parish a resident incumbent. How agreeable to picture to one's self, as has been done by poets and romance-writers, from Chaucer down to Goldsmith, a man devoted to his ministerial office, with not a wish or a thought ranging beyond the circuit of its cares! Nor is it in poetry and fiction only that such characters are found; they are scattered, it is hoped not sparingly, over real life, especially in sequestered and rural districts, where there is but small influx of new inhabitants, and little change of occupation. The spirit of the Gospel, unaided by acquisitions of profane learning and experience in the world, —that spirit, and the obligations of the sacred office may, in such situations, suffice to effect most of what is needful. But for the complex state of society that prevails in England, much more is required, both in large towns, and in many extensive districts of the country. A minister there should not only be irreproachable in manners and morals, but accomplished in learning, as far as is possible without sacrifice of the least of his pastoral duties. As necessary, perhaps more so, is it that he should be a citizen as well as a scholar; thoroughly acquainted with the structure of society, and the constitution of civil government, and able to reason upon both with the most expert; all ultimately in order to support the truths of Christianity, and to diffuse its blessings.

A young man coming fresh from the place of his education, cannot have brought with him these accomplishments; and if the scheme of equalising church incomes, which many advisers are much bent upon, be realised, so that there should be little or no secular inducement for a clergyman to desire a removal from the spot where he may chance to have been first set down; surely not only opportunities for obtaining the requisite qualifications would be diminished, but the motives for desiring to obtain them would be proportionably weakened. And yet these qualifications are indispensable for the diffusion of that knowledge, by which alone the political philosophy of the New Testament can be rightly expounded, and its precepts adequately enforced. In these times, when the press is daily exercising so great a power over the minds of the people,

for wrong or for right as may happen, *that* preacher ranks among the first of benefactors who, without stooping to the direct treatment of current politics and passing events, can furnish infallible guidance through the delusions that surround them; and who, appealing to the sanctions of Scripture, may place the grounds of its injunctions in so clear a light, that disaffection shall cease to be cultivated as a laudable propensity, and loyalty cleansed from the dishonour of a blind and prostrate obedience.

It is not, however, in regard to civic duties alone, that this knowledge in a minister of the Gospel is important; it is still more so for softening and subduing private and personal discontents. In all places, and at all times, men have gratuitously troubled themselves, because their survey of the dispensations of Providence has been partial and narrow; but now that readers are so greatly multiplied, men judge as they are *taught*, and repinings are engendered everywhere, by imputations being cast upon the government; and are prolonged or aggravated by being ascribed to misconduct or injustice in rulers, when the individual himself only is in fault. If a Christian pastor be competent to deal with these humours, as they may be dealt with, and by no members of society so successfully, both from more frequent and more favourable opportunities of intercourse, and by aid of the authority with which he speaks; he will be a teacher of moderation, a dispenser of the wisdom that blunts approaching distress by submission to God's will, and lightens, by patience, grievances which cannot be removed.

We live in times when nothing, of public good at least, is generally acceptable, but what we believe can be traced to preconceived intention, and specific acts and formal contrivances of human understanding. A Christian instructor thoroughly accomplished would be a standing restraint upon such presumptuousness of judgment, by impressing the truth that—

‘In the unreasoning progress of the world
A wiser spirit is at work for us,
A better eye than ours.’—*MS.*

Revelation points to the purity and peace of a future world; but our sphere of duty is upon earth; and the relations of impure and conflicting things to each other must be understood, or we shall be perpetually going wrong, in all but goodness of intention; and goodness of intention will itself relax through frequent disappointment. How desirable, then, is it, that a minister of the Gospel should be versed in the knowledge of existing facts, and be accustomed to a wide range of social experience! Nor is it less desirable for the purpose of counterbalancing and tempering in his own mind that ambition with which spiritual power is as apt to be tainted as any other species of power which men covet or possess.

It must be obvious that the scope of the argument is to discourage an attempt which would introduce into the Church of England an equality of income, and station, upon the model of that of Scotland. The sounder part of the Scottish nation know what good their ancestors derived from their church, and feel how deeply the living generation is indebted to it. They respect and love it, as accommodated in so great a measure to a comparatively poor country, through the far greater portion of which prevails a uniformity of employment; but the acknowledged deficiency of

theological learning among the clergy of that church is easily accounted for by this very equality. What else may be wanting there, it would be unpleasant to inquire, and might prove invidious to determine: one thing, however, is clear; that in all countries the temporalities of the Church Establishment should bear an analogy to the state of society, otherwise it cannot diffuse its influence through the whole community. In a country so rich and luxurious as England, the character of its clergy must unavoidably sink, and their influence be everywhere impaired, if individuals from the upper ranks, and men of leading talents, are to have no inducements to enter into that body but such as are purely spiritual. And this 'tinge of secularity' is no reproach to the clergy, nor does it imply a deficiency of spiritual endowments. Parents and guardians, looking forward to sources of honourable maintenance for their children and wards, often direct their thoughts early towards the church, being determined partly by outward circumstances, and partly by indications of seriousness, or intellectual fitness. It is natural that a boy or youth, with such a prospect before him, should turn his attention to those studies, and be led into those habits of reflection, which will in some degree tend to prepare him for the duties he is hereafter to undertake. As he draws nearer to the time when he will be called to these duties, he is both led and compelled to examine the Scriptures. He becomes more and more sensible of their truth. Devotion grows in him; and what might begin in temporal considerations, will end (as in a majority of instances we trust it does) in a spiritual-mindedness not unworthy of that Gospel, the lessons of which he is to teach, and the faith of which he is to inculcate. Not inappositely may be here repeated an observation which, from its obviousness and importance, must have been frequently made, viz. that the impoverishing of the clergy, and bringing their incomes much nearer to a level, would not cause them to become less worldly-minded: the emoluments, howsoever reduced, would be as eagerly sought for, but by men from lower classes in society; men who by their manners, habits, abilities, and the scanty measure of their attainments, would unavoidably be less fitted for their station, and less competent to discharge its duties.

Visionary notions have in all ages been afloat upon the subject of best providing for the clergy; notions which have been sincerely entertained by good men, with a view to the improvement of that order, and eagerly caught at and dwelt upon, by the designing, for its degradation and disparagement. Some are beguiled by what they call the *voluntary system*, not seeing (what stares one in the face at the very threshold) that they who stand in most need of religious instruction are unconscious of the want, and therefore cannot reasonably be expected to make any sacrifices in order to supply it. Will the licentious, the sensual, and the depraved, take from the means of their gratifications and pursuits, to support a discipline that cannot advance without uprooting the trees that bear the fruit which they devour so greedily? Will they pay the price of that seed whose harvest is to be reaped in an invisible world? A voluntary system for the religious exigencies of a people numerous and circumstanced as we are! Not more absurd would it be to expect that a knot of boys should draw upon the pittance of their pocket-money to build schools, or out of the abundance of their discretion be able to select fit masters to teach and keep them in order! Some, who clearly perceive the incompetence and folly of such a scheme for the agricultural part of the people, nevertheless think it feasible in large towns, where the

rich might subscribe for the religious instruction of the poor. Alas! they know little of the thick darkness that spreads over the streets and alleys of our large towns. The parish of Lambeth, a few years since, contained not more than one church and three or four small proprietary chapels, while dissenting chapels, of every denomination, were still more scantily found there; yet the inhabitants of the parish amounted at that time to upwards of 50,000. Were the parish church and the chapels of the Establishment existing there, an *impediment* to the spread of the Gospel among that mass of people? Who shall dare to say so? But if any one, in the face of the fact which has just been stated, and in opposition to authentic reports to the same effect from various other quarters, should still contend, that a voluntary system is sufficient for the spread and maintenance of religion, we would ask, what kind or religion? wherein would it differ, among the many, from deplorable fanaticism?

For the preservation of the Church Establishment, all men, whether they belong to it or not, could they perceive their true interest, would be strenuous: but how inadequate are its provisions for the needs of the country! and how much is it to be regretted that, while its zealous friends yield to alarms on account of the hostility of dissent, they should so much over-rate the danger to be apprehended from that quarter, and almost overlook the fact that hundreds of thousands of our fellow-countrymen, though formally and nominally of the Church of England, never enter her places of worship, neither have they communication with her ministers! This deplorable state of things was partly produced by a decay of zeal among the rich and influential, and partly by a want of due expansive power in the constitution of the Establishment as regulated by law. Private benefactors, in their efforts to build and endow churches, have been frustrated, or too much impeded by legal obstacles: these, where they are unreasonable or unfitted for the times, ought to be removed; and, keeping clear of intolerance and injustice, means should be used to render the presence and powers of the church commensurate with the wants of a shifting and still-increasing population.

This cannot be effected, unless the English Government vindicate the truth, that, as her church exists for the benefit of all (though not in equal degree), whether of her communion or not, all should be made to contribute to its support. If this ground be abandoned, cause will be given to fear that a moral wound may be inflicted upon the heart of the English people, for which a remedy cannot be speedily provided by the utmost efforts which the members of the church will themselves be able to make.

But let the friends of the church be of good courage. Powers are at work, by which, under Divine Providence, she may be strengthened and the sphere of her usefulness extended; not by alterations in her Liturgy, accommodated to this or that demand of finical taste, nor by cutting off this or that from her articles or Canons, to which the scrupulous or the overweening may object. Covert schism, and open nonconformity, would survive after alterations, however promising in the eyes of those whose subtilty had been exercised in making them. Latitudinarianism is the parhelion of liberty of conscience, and will ever successfully lay claim to a divided worship. Among Presbyterians, Socinians, Baptists, and Independents, there will always be found numbers who will tire of their several creeds, and some will come over to the church. Conventicles may disappear, congregations in each denomination may fall

into decay or be broken up, but the conquests which the National Church ought chiefly to aim at, lie among the thousands and tens of thousands of the unhappy outcasts who grow up with no religion at all. The wants of these cannot but be feelingly remembered. Whatever may be the disposition of the new constituencies under the reformed parliament, and the course which the men of their choice may be inclined or compelled to follow, it may be confidently hoped that individuals acting in their private capacities, will endeavour to make up for the deficiencies of the legislature. Is it too much to expect that proprietors of large estates, where the inhabitants are without religious instruction, or where it is sparingly supplied, will deem it their duty to take part in this good work; and that thriving manufacturers and merchants will, in their several neighbourhoods, be sensible of the like obligation, and act upon it with generous rivalry?

Moreover, the force of public opinion is rapidly increasing: and some may bend to it, who are not so happy as to be swayed by a higher motive; especially they who derive large incomes from lay-impropriations, in tracts of country where ministers are few and meagrely provided for. A claim still stronger may be acknowledged by those who, round their superb habitations, or elsewhere, walk over vast estates which were lavished upon their ancestors by royal favouritism or purchased at insignificant prices after church-spoliation: such proprietors, though not conscience-stricken (there is no call for that) may be prompted to make a return for which their tenantry and dependents will learn to bless their names. An impulse has been given; an accession of means from these several sources, co-operating with a *well-considered* change in the distribution of some parts of the property at present possessed by the church, a change scrupulously founded upon due respect to law and justice, will, we trust, bring about so much of what her friends desire, that the rest may be calmly waited for, with thankfulness for what shall have been obtained.

Let it not be thought unbecoming in a layman, to have treated at length a subject with which the clergy are more intimately conversant. All may, without impropriety, speak of what deeply concerns all; nor need an apology be offered for going over ground which has been trod before so ably and so often: without pretending, however, to anything of novelty, either in matter or manner, something may have been offered to view, which will save the writer from the imputation of having little to recommend his labour, but goodness of intention.

It was with reference to thoughts and feelings expressed in verse, that I entered upon the above notices, and with verse I will conclude. The passage is extracted from my MSS. written above thirty years ago: it turns upon the individual dignity which humbleness of social condition does not preclude, but frequently promotes. It has no direct bearing upon clubs for the discussion of public affairs, nor upon political or trade unions; but if a single workman—who, being a member of one of those clubs, runs the risk of becoming an agitator, or who, being enrolled in a union, must be left without a will of his own, and therefore a slave—should read these lines, and be touched by them, I should indeed rejoice, and little would I care for losing credit as a poet with intemperate critics, who think differently from me upon political philosophy or public measures, if the sober-minded admit that, in general views, my affections have been moved, and my imagination exercised, under and *for* the guidance of reason.

'Here might I pause, and bend in reverence
 To Nature, and the power of human minds;
 To men, as they are men within themselves.
 How oft high service is performed within,
 When all the external man is rude in show;
 Not like a temple rich with pomp and gold,
 But a mere mountain chapel that protects
 Its simple worshippers from sun and shower!
 Of these, said I, shall be my song; of these,
 If future years mature me for the task,
 Will I record the praises, making verse
 Deal boldly with substantial things—in truth
 And sanctity of passion, speak of these,
 That justice may be done, obeisance paid
 Where it is due. Thus haply shall I teach,
 Inspire, through unadulterated ears
 Pour rapture, tenderness, and hope; my theme
 No other than the very heart of man,
 As found among the best of those who live,
 Not unexalted by religious faith,
 Nor uninformed by books, good books, though few,
 In Nature's presence: thence may I select
 Sorrow that is not sorrow, but delight,
 And miserable love that is not pain
 To hear of, for the glory that redounds
 Therefrom to human kind, and what we are.
 Be mine to follow with no timid step
 Where knowledge leads me; it shall be my pride
 That I have dared to tread this holy ground,
 Speaking no dream, but things oracular,
 Matter not lightly to be heard by those
 Who to the letter of the outward promise
 Do read the invisible soul; by men adroit
 In speech, and for communion with the world
 Accomplished, minds whose faculties are then
 Most active when they are most eloquent,
 And elevated most when most admired.
 Men may be found of other mould than these;
 Who are their own upholders, to themselves
 Encouragement and energy, and will;
 Expressing liveliest thoughts in lively words
 As native passion dictates. Others, too,
 There are, among the walks of homely life,
 Still higher, men for contemplation framed;
 Shy, and unpractised in the strife of phrase;
 Meek men, whose very souls perhaps would sink
 Beneath them, summoned to such intercourse.
 Theirs is the language of the heavens, the power,
 The thought, the image, and the silent joy:
 Words are but under-agents in their souls;
 When they are grasping with their greatest strength
 They do not breathe among them; this I speak
 In gratitude to God, who feeds our hearts
 For his own service, knoweth, loveth us,
 When we are unregarded by the world.'

NOTES

EPITAPHS AND ELEGIAC PIECES

P. 1. EPITAPHS. *Translated from Chiabrera*:—Wordsworth gives some account of Chiabrera (of Savona, b. 1552, d. 1637) in his *Essay on Epitaphs*, contributed to Coleridge's periodical, *The Friend*. With regard to the persons commemorated in the epitaphs, I must, with one exception (see No. IX.), echo Prof. Knight's 'I have been unable to obtain any definite information.'

P. 1. I. Non spargete sospir, diletti amici. No. 1. of the *Epitaphs*: on Signor Francesco Cini (Ceni). Reference is made to the *Rime di Gabriello Chiabrera*, 3 vols. Milan, 1807. Vol. II. pp. 207 foll.

P. 1. II. Forse ragion di buon governo trasse. *Epitaph XIV.* on Signor Roberto Titi.

P. 2. 1809:—Published in *The Friend*, 1810.

P. 2. III. O tu, che muovi alla tua strada intento. *Epitaph VIII.* on Monsignor Giuseppe Ferreri, Arcivescovo di Urbino.

1809:—Published in *The Friend*, 1810.

P. 2. IV. Uomo non è, che pervenuto a morte. *Epitaph XXV.* on Signor Giambattista Feo.

P. 3, l. 13. *Auster and Boötes*:—The south and the north winds, Boötes being strictly the constellation of that name.

L. 15. *Pelorus*:—A promontory on the north-east coast of Sicily (Capo di Faro).

1809:—Published in *The Friend*, 1809.

P. 3. V. Fu ver che Ambrosio Salinero a torto. *Epitaph VII.*

L. 22. *Permessus*:—A river of Bœotia rising in Mount Helicon, and, like the better-known Hippocrene and Mount Parnassus, named allegorically for poetry.

P. 4. VI. Ancora entro i confin di fanciullezza. *Epitaph XIX.* on Signor Roberto Dati.

1809:—Published in *The Friend*, 1809.

P. 4. VII. O Lelio, o fior gentil di gentilezza. *Epitaph XXIV.* on Signor Lelio Pavese.

L. 4. *Aglaia*:—‘The bright one,’ one of the Graces.

L. 10. *Sebeto*:—A river running into the Bay of Naples through the east side of the town. Prof. Knight’s note on Sebeto should be transferred to Pelorus: cp. No. IV. of these *Epitaphs*.

P. 4. VIII. Non senza gran cordoglio il Zio ripose. *Epitaph IX.* on Monsignor Abbate Francesco Pozzobonello.

P. 5. 1809:—Published in *The Friend*, 1810.

P. 5. IX. Alma cortese, che quinci oltre passi. *Epitaph XXVII.* on Signor Bernardino Baldi. In the first line of this translation the name is printed Balbi, whether by a mistake of Wordsworth or his printer or his copy of Chiabrera, I do not know. The mistake has unfortunately hitherto concealed the identity of this, the only well-known person celebrated in these epitaphs. Bernardino Baldi (1553-1617) was a distinguished man, mathematician, philosopher, linguist, historian, and poet.

1809:—Published in *The Friend*, 1810.

P. 6. I. 1. 2. *Vernon her new name*:—This lady was named Carleton; she, along with a sister, was brought up in the neighbourhood of Ambleside. The epitaph, a part of it at least, is in the church at Bromsgrove, where she resided after her marriage.—I. F.

P. 6. II. *Published 1837*:—These verses were inscribed upon the tombstone of Wordsworth’s son, Thomas, who died December 1, 1812, and was buried in Grasmere churchyard. The date of their composition is not known.

P. 7. IV. 1. 5. *EPITAPH in the Chapel-yard of Langdale, Westmoreland.* Rev. Owen Lloyd (1803-1841) was a friend of Hartley Coleridge and of Faber, and ‘would have been greatly distinguished as a scholar but for inherited infirmities of bodily constitution, which, from early childhood, affected his mind.’—(I. F.) He held the small cure of Langdale for nearly twelve years.

P. 7. V. *ADDRESS to the Scholars of the Village School of —:—*
[Hawkshead].

P. 9. VI. *ELEGIAC STANZAS suggested by a picture of Peele Castle, in a storm, painted by Sir George Beaumont*:—More correctly Piel Castle, near Barrow-in-Furness.

P. 10, ll. 14-16:—In edition 1820, after ‘what then I saw,’ came—
and add a gleam

Of lustre, known to neither sea nor land,

But borrowed from the youthful Poet’s dream.

Writing to Barron Field on October 24, 1828, Wordsworth says:
“The light that never was, on sea or land” shall be restored. I need

not trouble you with the reasons that put me upon the alteration.' One of the reasons was probably that which renders it advisable to notice the alteration, viz. the frequent misunderstanding of the stanza by readers who are naturally haunted by its strange poetic power, but forget the context. The alteration is in fact a rather prosaic explanation of lines, which by their very beauty had been given a wider and more mystical meaning than was originally intended.

Ll. 21, 22. In edition 1807 'a treasure-house, a mine of peaceful years.' The stanza was omitted in editions 1820-1843, probably because Wordsworth felt that the accumulation of metaphors, and especially the metaphor of the mine, were inappropriate to a painted picture. In edition 1845 the stanza was replaced, as in the text.

L. 42. '*Him whom I deplore*':—The poet's brother John. Cp. the next two poems, and *Introd.*, p. xlv.

P. 15. VIII. ELEGIAC VERSES, *in memory of my brother, John Wordsworth*, ll. 61-64. These verses, with the first four lines of stanza iii., were inscribed on a rock near Grisedale Tarn in 1882, by the direction of the Wordsworth Society, on the motion of the Rev. H. D. (since Canon) Rawnsley.

P. 15. IX. SONNET, l. 1. *Angelic boy*:—Wordsworth's grandchild, youngest son of John Wordsworth by his first wife, who was obliged by ill-health to live in Italy, where she did not long survive this child of five years old.

P. 16. XI. INVOCATION TO THE EARTH. *February, 1816*:—Composed immediately after the *Thanksgiving Ode*, to which it may be considered as a second part.—I. F. Cp. vol. II. p. 77.

P. 17. XII. LINES *written on a blank leaf in a copy of the Author's poem 'The Excursion,' upon hearing of the death of the late Vicar of Kendal*, l. 5:—The Rev. Matthew Murfitt, Vicar of Kendal 1806-1814, formerly Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge.

P. 18. XIII. ELEGIAC STANZAS *addressed to Sir G. H. B. upon the Death of his Sister-in-Law*:—Frances Fermor, widow of Henry Fermor of Fritwell, Oxfordshire. This lady had been a widow long before I knew her. Her husband was of the family of the lady celebrated in the *Rape of the Lock*, and was, I believe, a Roman Catholic. The sorrow which his death caused her was fearful in its character, as described in this poem, but was subdued in course of time by the strength of her religious faith. I have been for many weeks at a time an inmate with her at Coleorton Hall, as were also Mrs. Wordsworth and my sister. . . .—(I. F.)

P. 20. XIV. ELEGIAC MUSINGS *in the grounds of Coleorton Hall, the seat of the late Sir G. H. Beaumont, Bart.* Ll. 34-39 were added in ed. 1837.

L. 47. '*Within itself its sweetness close*':—Cp. Fairfax's translation of Tasso's *Godfrey of Bullogne*; or, *the Recovery of Jerusalem*, bk. II. stanza xviii. :

The rose within herself her sweetness closed.⁹—Prof. Knight.

P. 21. XV. WRITTEN AFTER THE DEATH OF CHARLES LAMB, I. 23. *The most gentle creature nursed in fields*:—This way of indicating the name of my lamented friend has been found fault with; perhaps rightly so; but I may say in justification of the double sense of the word, that similar allusions are not uncommon in epitaphs. One of the best in our language in verse I ever read was upon a person who bore the name of Palmer; and the course of the thought throughout turned upon the Life of the Departed, considered as a pilgrimage. Nor can I think that the objection in the present case will have much force with any one who remembers Charles Lamb's beautiful sonnet addressed to his own name, and ending:

No deed of mine shall shame thee, gentle name!—W.

P. 24. XVI. EXTEMPORE EFFUSION UPON THE DEATH OF JAMES HOGG, ll. 9, 10:—Scott died Sept. 21, 1832, and was buried in Dryburgh Abbey; Hogg died Nov. 21, 1835; Coleridge, July 25, 1834; Lamb, Dec. 27, 1834; Crabbe, Feb. 3, 1832; Mrs. Hemans, May 16, 1835.

P. 25. XVII. INSCRIPTION for a Monument in Crosthwaite Church, in the Vale of Keswick, ll. 3, 4:—Southey died March 21, 1843.

ODE

INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY FROM RECOLLECTIONS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD. This was composed during my residence at Town-End, Grasmere. Two years at least passed between the writing of the four first stanzas and the remaining part. To the attentive and competent reader the whole sufficiently explains itself; but there may be no harm in adverting here to particular feelings or *experiences* of my own mind on which the structure of the poem partly rests. Nothing was more difficult for me in childhood than to admit the notion of death as a state applicable to my own being. I have said elsewhere—

A simple child,
That lightly draws its breath,
And feels its life in every limb,
What should it know of death!

But it was not so much from feelings of animal vivacity that *my* difficulty came as from a sense of the indomitableness of the Spirit within me. I used to brood over the stories of Enoch and Elijah, and almost to persuade myself that, whatever might become of others, I should be translated, in something of the same way, to heaven. With a feeling

congenial to this, I was often unable to think of external things as having external existence, and I communed with all that I saw as something not apart from, but inherent in, my own immaterial nature. Many times while going to school have I grasped at a wall or tree to recall myself from this abyss of idealism to the reality. At that time I was afraid of such processes. In later periods of life I have deplored, as we have all reason to do, a subjugation of an opposite character, and have rejoiced over the remembrances, as is expressed in the lines—

Obstinate questionings

Of sense and outward things,

Fallings from us, vanishings, etc.

To that dream-like vividness and splendour which invest objects of sight in childhood, every one, I believe, if he would look back, could bear testimony, and I need not dwell upon it here: but having in the poem regarded it as presumptive evidence of a prior state of existence, I think it right to protest against a conclusion, which has given pain to some good and pious persons, that I meant to inculcate such a belief. It is far too shadowy a notion to be recommended to faith, as more than an element in our instincts of immortality. But let us bear in mind that, though the idea is not advanced in revelation, there is nothing there to contradict it, and the fall of man presents an analogy in its favour. Accordingly, a pre-existent state has entered into the popular creeds of many nations; and, among all persons acquainted with classic literature, is known as an ingredient in Platonic philosophy. Archimedes said that he could move the world if he had a point whereon to rest his machine. Who has not felt the same aspirations as regards the world of his own mind? Having to wield some of its elements when I was impelled to write this poem on the 'Immortality of the Soul,' I took hold of the notion of pre-existence as having sufficient foundation in humanity for authorising me to make for my purpose the best use of it I could as a poet.—I. F.

To the Fenwick note may be added this record of a statement made by Wordsworth to his nephew and biographer (*Memoirs*, vol. II. p. 476): 'In my Ode on the *Intimations of Immortality in Childhood*, I do not profess to give a literal representation of the state of the affections and of the moral being in childhood. I record my own feelings at that time—my absolute spirituality, my "all-soulness," if I may so speak. At that time I could not believe that I should lie down quietly in the grave, and that my body would moulder into dust.'

P. 27, l. 28. Various explanations have been given of the 'fields of sleep,' but any precise explanation, such as 'the yet reposeful slumbering countryside' (Prof. Hales, quoted by Prof. Dowden), robs the line of its peculiar effect upon the emotions, and is therefore incorrect. The sounds of the expressions 'Elysian Fields,' 'Garden of Sleep,' and the ideas suggested by them, were doubtless half-present to Wordsworth's consciousness. Lines of this evasive, undecipherable charm may easily be found in all poets, but do not form a marked characteristic of Wordsworth

as they do, to take the most conspicuous instance, of Virgil. When I wrote this note for a volume of *Selections* (1901) I had not seen a note by Mr. H. B. Cotterill (*Wordsworth, Ode, etc.*, in Blackie's English Classics, also published 1901), in which he speaks of Wordsworth 'using a common word in its literal sense, but in such connection that we receive an impression of dim undefinable grandeur,' and is reminded also of such 'rather artificial expressions as Virgil's *lugentes campi* and Dante's *città dolente*.'

Ll. 19-40 owe several expressions to *The Idle Shepherd Boys* (esp. ll. 1-4 and 23-30), which Wordsworth wrote in 1800.

L. 41. In a MS. version, 'Even yet more gladness, I can hold it all.'

P. 28, l. 76. Prof. Knight, cps. Bacon, *Of Youth and Age*; 'a certaine *Rabbine*, upon the Text; *Your Young Men shall see visions, and your Old Men shall dreame dreames*; inferreth, that *Young Men* are admitted nearer to God than *Old*; because *Vision* is a clearer Revelation, then a *Dreame*.'

L. 86. *Six years*:—In ed. 1807, 'four years.'

L. 103. '*Humorous stage*':—Daniel, sonnet introductory to *Musophilus*, l. 1.—Prof. Knight. Wordsworth had, of course, in mind the speech of the melancholy Jacques in *As You Like It*, Act II. Sc. vii.

P. 29, l. 117. *In darkness lost, the darkness of the grave*:—This line was first inserted in ed. 1820.

L. 120. *A Presence which is not to be put by*:—After this line originally came the following, which were omitted in ed. 1820 in deference to Coleridge's criticism (*Biographia Literaria*, ch. ix.)—

To whom the grave

Is but a lonely bed without the sense or sight

Of day or the warm light,

A place of thought where we in waiting lie;

Mr. Hutchinson illustrates this passage from Dorothy Wordsworth's *Journal* for April 29, 1802: 'We went to John's grave, sate a while at first; afterwards William lay, and I lay, in the trench under the fence—he with his eyes shut listening to the waterfalls and the birds. . . . We were unseen by one another. We thought that it would be so sweet thus to lie in the grave, to hear the peaceful sounds of the earth, and just to know that our dear friends were near.' Mr. Hutchinson continues: 'The thought which Dorothy here tells us was so sweet to her and William—that of lying awake and conscious of sound, etc., in the grave—is the same which the little girl in *We are Seven* is described as having so obstinately clung to regarding her dead brother and sister.'

L. 122. *Of heaven-born freedom*:—Altered in ed. 1815 from 'Of untamed pleasures.'

L. 126. *Full soon thy Soul shall have her earthly freight*:—After this line in a MS. copy, came the following—

The world upon thy noble nature seize with all its vanities.

Prof. Knight.

Ll. 137, 138. Altered in ed. 1815 from—

Of Childhood, whether fluttering or at rest,
With new-born hope for ever in his breast.

P. 30, l. 153. Altered in 1815 from 'Uphold us, cherish us, and make.'

L. 188. *Forebode not any*:—Altered in ed. 1836-1837 from 'Think not of any.'

P. 31, l. 199. *Another race hath been, and other palms are won*:—The meaning of this line and its connection with the context have been much discussed. Wordsworth has just explained that he has only relinquished the old ecstatic delight in Nature of his childhood to live beneath Nature's more habitual sway. He loves the brooks as much as ever, the new-born day is as lovely as ever, the clouds of sunset—one expects him to say 'are as lovely as ever,' but he gives the thought a more particular and a new turn: the clouds are as lovely, but they take a sober colouring from the thoughts of the mature man, who has kept watch o'er man's mortality, and has seen the passing of a generation. The thought glides into the reflection 'another race hath been, and other palms are won' from the preceding words, without any close reference to the general argument. No doubt the word suggests the reflections of an older man than Wordsworth was at the time of writing the poem; but one feels here that the thought is partly dominated by the loss of his brother, who was drowned in 1805, certainly before this *Ode* was finished. The imagery of the line, borrowed from St. Paul, may very well have been suggested by the death of his brother, a martyr to duty.

1802-1806:—Dated by Wordsworth 1803-1806, but Mr. Hutchinson, in his ed. of *Poems in Two Volumes*, vol. II. p. 226, makes it certain that Wordsworth began this *Ode* in March 1802, the day after the lines 'My heart leaps up when I behold,' etc., three of which lines were in ed. 1815 placed as a motto at the head of the *Ode*. He also points out that in edd. 1815-1843 *The Rainbow* and this *Ode* 'respectively open and conclude the collective issue of Wordsworth's minor poems.'

THE EXCURSION

The Excursion was published in 1814. The story of Margaret, which occurs in the first book, was begun at Racedown in 1795, and finished at Alfoxden in 1797. Wordsworth was at work upon 'the Pedlar,' Dec. 1801 to Feb. 1802, as we learn from Dorothy Wordsworth's diary: i.e. probably he wrote much of Books I. and II. at this time. The rest of the poem was written at Allan Bank and at the Rectory, Grasmere, 1809-1813. *The Recluse*, the great 'philosophical epic' in three parts, of which *The Excursion* was to be the second, was never finished. A part of it, from which Wordsworth quotes at the end of the Preface to

The Excursion, was written (about seven hundred lines) in 1798, and was published in 1888 by Macmillan and Co., who hold the copyright.

P. 33. PREFACE TO THE EDITION OF 1814, l. 24. *That Work*:—*The Prelude*, not published until after Wordsworth's death. See p. 566.

P. 34, l. 23. '*Fit audience let me find though few!*':—*Paradise Lost*, vii. 31.

P. 35, l. 83, 84:—

Not mine own fears, nor the prophetic Soul
Of the wide world dreaming on things to come.

Shakespeare's *Sonnets*.—W.

P. 36. BOOK FIRST. THE WANDERER:— . . . Perhaps my purpose of giving an additional interest to these my poems, in the eyes of my nearest and dearest friends, may be promoted by saying a few words upon the character of the Wanderer, the Solitary, and the Pastor, and some other of the persons introduced. And first of the principal one, the Wanderer. My lamented friend Southey (for this is written a month after his decease) used to say that he had been born a papist, the course of life which would in all probability have been his was the one for which he was most fitted and most to his mind,—that of a Benedictine monk, in a convent, furnished, as many once were and some still are, with an inexhaustible library. *Books*, as appears from many passages in his writings, and as was evident to those who had opportunities of observing his daily life, were in fact his *passion*; and *wandering*, I can with truth affirm, was *mine*; but this propensity in me was happily counteracted by inability from want of fortune to fulfil my wishes. But, had I been born in a class which would have deprived me of what is called a liberal education, it is not unlikely that, being strong in body, I should have taken to a way of life such as that in which my Pedlar passed the greater part of his days. At all events, I am here called upon freely to acknowledge that the character I have represented in his person is chiefly an idea of what I fancied my own character might have become in his circumstances. Nevertheless, much of what he says and does had an external existence, that fell under my own youthful and subsequent observation. An individual named Patrick, by birth and education a Scotchman, followed this humble occupation for many years, and afterwards settled in the town of Kendal. He married a kinswoman of my wife's, and her sister Sarah was brought up from her ninth year under this good man's roof. My own imaginations I was happy to find clothed in reality, and fresh ones suggested, by what she reported of this man's tenderness of heart, his strong and pure imagination, and his solid attainments in literature, chiefly religious, whether in prose or verse. At Hawkshead also, while I was a schoolboy, there occasionally resided a Packman (the name then generally given to persons of this calling), with whom I had frequent conversations upon what had befallen him, and what he had

observed, during his wandering life; and, as was natural, we took much to each other: and, upon the subject of *Pedlarism* in general, as *then* followed, and its favourableness to an intimate knowledge of human concerns, not merely among the humbler classes of society, I need say nothing here in addition to what is to be found in *The Excursion*, and a note attached to it. Now for the Solitary. Of him I have much less to say. Not long after we took up our abode at Grasmere, came to reside there, from what motive I either never knew or have forgotten, a Scotchman a little past the middle of life, who had for many years been chaplain to a Highland regiment. He was in no respect, as far as I know, an interesting character, though in his appearance there was a good deal that attracted attention, as if he had been shattered in fortune, and not happy in mind. Of his quondam position I availed myself, to connect with the Wanderer, also a Scotchman, a character suitable to my purpose, the elements of which I drew from several persons with whom I had been connected, and who fell under my observation during frequent residences in London at the beginning of the French Revolution. The chief of these was, one may *now* say, a Mr. Fawcett, a preacher at a dissenting meeting-house in the Old Jewry. . . . I. F.

P. 43, ll. 324, 325 till 1837 stood as one line, 'A vagrant Merchant bent beneath his load.' No doubt the three terminations in *nt* were displeasing.

Ll. 341, 342. At the risk of giving a shock to the prejudices of artificial society, I have ever been ready to pay homage to the aristocracy of nature; under a conviction that vigorous human-heartedness is the constituent principle of true taste. It may still, however, be satisfactory to have prose testimony how far a Character, employed for purposes of imagination, is founded upon general fact. I therefore subjoin an extract from an author who had opportunities of being well acquainted with a class of men, from whom my own personal knowledge emboldened me to draw this portrait.

'We learn from Cæsar and other Roman Writers, that the travelling merchants who frequented Gaul and other barbarous countries, either newly conquered by the Roman arms, or bordering on the Roman conquests, were ever the first to make the inhabitants of those countries familiarly acquainted with the Roman modes of life, and to inspire them with an inclination to follow the Roman fashions, and to enjoy Roman conveniences. In North America, travelling merchants from the Settlements have done and continue to do much more towards civilising the Indian natives than all the missionaries, papist or protestant, who have ever been sent among them.

'It is farther to be observed, for the credit of this most useful class of men, that they commonly contribute, by their personal manners, no less than by the sale of their wares, to the refinement of the people among whom they travel. Their dealings form them to great quickness of wit and acuteness of judgment. Having constant occasion to recommend

themselves and their goods, they acquire habits of the most obliging attention, and the most insinuating address. As in their peregrinations they have opportunity of contemplating the manners of various men and various cities, they become eminently skilled in the knowledge of the world. *As they wander, each alone, through thinly-inhabited districts, they form habits of reflection and of sublime contemplation.* With all these qualifications, no wonder, that they should often be, in remote parts of the country, the best mirrors of fashion, and censors of manners; and should contribute much to polish the roughness, and soften the rusticity of our peasantry. It is not more than twenty or thirty years since a young man going from any part of Scotland to England, of purpose to *carry the pack*, was considered as going to lead the life and acquire the fortune of a gentleman. When, after twenty years' absence, in that honourable line of employment, he returned with his acquisitions to his native country, he was regarded as a gentleman to all intents and purposes.—Heron's *Journey in Scotland*, i. p. 89.—W.

P. 44, ll. 370, 371. Cp. Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, Act i. Sc. ii. l. 5 : 'O, I have suffer'd With those that I saw suffer.'

P. 51, l. 703. '*Trotting brooks*':—Burns, *Epistle to William Simpson*, stanza xv.

The Muse, nae poet ever fand her,
Till by himsel he learn'd to wander,
Adown some trottin' burn's meander,
An' no think lang.

P. 55, ll. 871-916 were the first part of *The Excursion* to be written, as the Fenwick note tells us. They were composed in 1795 at Race-down.

P. 60. BOOK SECOND. THE SOLITARY, l. 90. Wordsworth does not aim at topographical accuracy in *The Excursion*, but combines real scenes according to his fancy. In the Fenwick note he says: 'In the poem, I suppose that the Pedlar and I ascended from a plain country up the vale of Langdale, and struck off a good way above the chapel to the western side of the vale. We ascended the hill and thence looked down upon the circular recess in which lies Blea Tarn, chosen by the Solitary for his retreat. After we quit his cottage, passing over a low ridge we descend into another vale, that of Little Langdale, towards the head of which stands, embowered or partly shaded by yews and other trees, something between a cottage and a mansion or gentleman's house such as they once were in this country. This I convert into the parsonage, and at the same time, and as by the waving of a magic wand, I turn the comparatively confined vale of Langdale, its Tarn, and the rude chapel which once adorned the valley, into the stately and comparatively spacious vale of Grasmere, its Lake, and its ancient Parish Church; and upon the side of Loughrigg Fell, at the foot of the Lake, and looking down upon it and the whole vale and its encompassing mountains, the

Pastor is supposed by me to stand, when at sunset he addresses his companions in words which I hope my readers will remember, or I should not have taken the trouble of giving so much in detail the materials on which my mind actually worked.'

P. 65, ll. 314, 315. '*A world not moving to his mind*':—George Dyer, *Lines on Gilbert Wakefield*.

L. 324. They climb Lingmoor, the flat-topped, heathery hill which divides Langdale from Little Langdale. The description which follows is of Blea Tarn and its little mountain valley, one of the loveliest spots in the Lake Country. The valley is no longer 'treeless,' as there is a small fir wood on the west side of the tarn.

P. 67, l. 398. '*I did so.*'—This is the punctuation of the original ed. of 1814, to which I have returned. Later edd. have only a comma at 'so'; originally, I suspect, from a misprint.

P. 68, ll. 443, 444. *A Novel of Voltaire, His famous Optimist*:—The novel meant is *Candide ou l'Optimisme*. In a letter to Rowan Hamilton, October 27, 1831 (*Knight's Life*, III. (xi.) p. 208), comparing Voltaire's celebrity with Scott's, Wordsworth writes: 'Voltaire, no doubt, was full as extensively known; and filled a larger space probably in the eye of Europe, for he was a great theatrical writer (which Scott has not proved himself to be), and miscellaneous to that degree that there was something for all classes of readers; but the pleasure afforded by his writings—with the exception of some of his tragedies and minor poems—was not pure, and in this Scott is greatly his superior.'

P. 70, ll. 550-552. In the Fenwick note, speaking of 'an ugly structure' in Grasmere Churchyard, 'built to receive the hearse, which is recently come into use,' Wordsworth continues: 'It would not be worth while to allude to this building or the hearse-vehicle it contains, but that the latter has been the means of introducing a change much to be lamented in the mode of conducting funerals among the mountains. Now the coffin is lodged in the hearse at the door of the house of the deceased, and the corpse is so conveyed to the churchyard gate: all the solemnity which formerly attended its progress, as described in the poem, is put an end to. So much do I regret this, that I beg to be excused for giving utterance here to a wish that, should it befall me to die at Rydal Mount, my own body may be carried to Grasmere Church after the manner in which, till lately, that of every one was borne to that place of sepulture, namely, on the shoulders of neighbours, no house being passed without some words of a funeral psalm being sung at the time by the attendants.'

P. 71, l. 586. Before ed. 1837—

They faint not, but advance towards the grave.

The revised line is not intended to be read as an Alexandrine; it is an instance, among many, where Wordsworth evidently felt a certain inappropriateness in giving full weight to unimportant words or to syllables which are only very lightly pronounced in ordinary speech. A

somewhat similar case is l. 559 above, where in ed. 1845 'tow'rds its home' was substituted for 'to its home.'

P. 73, l. 692. *Two huge Peaks*:—The Langdale Pikes. They cannot really be seen from the cottage, but they form a magnificent picture from higher ground.

P. 74, ll. 717-719. Professor Knight notes that 'this is strictly accurate. On and about the 21st June, the sun, as seen from Blea Tarn, sets just between the Langdale Pikes.'

P. 80. BOOK THIRD. DESPONDENCY, l. 73. Prof. Knight notes that 'the local allusions in this passage, and in what follows, are most exact and literal,' and describes the topography.—*Eversley* ed., vol. v. p. 108.

P. 81, l. 112. Wordsworth in a note transcribes a passage from Burnet's *Telluris Theoria sacra*, etc., second ed., p. 89, 'expressing corresponding sentiments, excited by objects of a similar nature.'

P. 92, l. 649. This passage has an evident connection with the deaths of Wordsworth's children, Catharine and Thomas, in June and December of the year 1812.

P. 94, l. 701. Cp. *The Borderers*, l. 1775.

L. 720. This line is repeated from Book II. l. 832. Cp. 'blind vapour' in l. 831 there with 'blind mist' here.

L. 726. *The tree of Liberty*:—Prof. Knight calls attention to the custom of planting trees as symbols of liberty, borrowed by the Jacobins from the American practice in the War of Independence.

P. 95, ll. 776, 777. '*Liberty, I worshipped thee, and find thee but a Shade*':—Cp. *Dion Cassius*, xlvii. 49, where Brutus is represented as quoting this saying of Heracles (from an unknown source):—

ὁ τλήμων ἀρετή, λόγος ἄρ' ἦσθ', ἐγὼ δέ σε
ὥς ἔργον ἥσκουν· σὺ δ' ἄρ' ἐδούλευες τύχη.

'Poor virtue! So thou wert after all a mere idea, while I practised thee as a reality: but thou wert Fortune's slave all the while.' The saying is not given in Plutarch's life of Brutus. It is probably the original of Wordsworth's quotation, altered in transmission.

P. 99, l. 931. 'A man is supposed to improve by going out into the *World*, by visiting *London*. Artificial man does; he extends with his sphere; but alas! that sphere is microscopic; it is formed of minutiae, and he surrenders his genuine vision to the artist, in order to embrace it in his ken. His bodily senses grow acute, even to barren and inhuman pruriency; while his mental become proportionally obtuse. The reverse is the Man of Mind: he who is placed in the sphere of Nature and of God, might be a mock at Tattersall's and Brooks's, and a sneer at St. James's: he would certainly be swallowed alive by the first *Pizarro* that crossed him:—But when he walks along the river of Amazons; when he rests his eye on the unrivalled Andes; when he measures the long and

watered savanna, or contemplates, from a sudden promontory, the distant, vast Pacific—and feels himself a freeman in this vast theatre, and commanding each ready produced fruit of this wilderness, and each progeny of this stream—his exaltation is not less than imperial. He is as gentle, too, as he is great: his emotions of tenderness keep pace with his elevation of sentiment; for, he says, “these were made by a good Being, who, unsought by me, placed me here to enjoy them.” He becomes at once a child and a king. His mind is in himself; from hence he argues and from hence he acts, and he argues unerringly, and acts magisterially; his mind in himself is also in his God; and therefore he loves, and therefore he soars.’—From the notes upon *The Hurricane*, a Poem, by William Gilbert.

The Reader, I am sure, will thank me for the above quotation, which, though from a strange book, is one of the finest passages of modern English prose.—W.

L. 947. *The melancholy Muccawiss*:—The Whip-poor-will. In MS. versions of this line the name is found written Whip-pow-will and whip-poor-will.—Prof. Knight. Cp. *A Morning Exercise*, l. 16, above, vol. i. p. 243.

P. 103. BOOK FOURTH. DESPONDENCY CORRECTED, l. 131. See, upon this subject, Baxter’s most interesting review of his own opinions and sentiments in the decline of life.—W. Prof. Knight quotes Matthew Sylvester’s *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, bk. i. part i. l. 213, p. 32: ‘To despise earth is easy to me; but not so easy to be acquainted and conversant in Heaven. I have nothing in this world which I could not easily let go: but to get satisfying apprehension of the other world is the great and grievous difficulty.’

P. 104, ll. 161, 162. *Mistrust is of such incapacity*:—I.e. of the infirmity of l. 146 and the previous lines.

P. 105, l. 206. *Time*:—This subject is treated at length in the Ode: *Intimations of Immortality*.—W. Vol. III. pp. 26 foll.

P. 108, l. 331. The passage quoted from Daniel is taken from a poem addressed to the Lady Margaret, Countess of Cumberland, and the two last lines, printed in italics, are by him translated from Seneca (*Nat. Quæst. Prologus*, § 5). The whole poem is very beautiful. I will transcribe four stanzas from it, as they contain an admirable picture of the state of a wise man’s mind in a time of public commotion:

Nor is he moved with all the thunder-cracks
Of tyrant’s threats, or with the surly brow
Of Power, that proudly sits on others’ crimes,
Charged with more crying sins than those he checks.
The storms of sad confusion that may grow
Up in the present for the coming times,
Appal not him; that hath no side at all,
But of himself, and knows the worst can fall.

Although his heart (so near allied to earth)
 Cannot but pity the perplexed state
 Of troublous and distressed mortality,
 That thus make way unto the ugly birth
 Of their own sorrows, and do still beget
 Affliction upon Imbecility;
 Yet seeing thus the course of things must run,
 He looks thereon not strange, but as fore-done.

And whilst distraught ambition compasses
 And is encompassed, while as craft deceives,
 And is deceived; whilst man doth ransack man,
 And builds on blood, and rises by distress;
 And th' Inheritance of desolation leaves
 To great-expecting hopes: He looks thereon,
 As from the shore of peace, with unwet eye,
 And bears no venture in Impiety.

Thus, Lady, fares that man that hath prepared
 A rest for his desires; and sees all things
 Beneath him; and hath learned this book of man,
 Full of the notes of frailty; and compared
 The best of glory with her sufferings:
 By whom, I see, you labour all you can
 To plant your heart! and set your thoughts as near
 His glorious mansion as your powers can bear.—W.

P. 109, l. 387. Wordsworth marks 'feathery bunch' as a quotation, and the phrase occurs in *The Favorite Village*, by James Hurdis (p. 125 of first ed., 1800), in a description of a redbreast which has entered the poet's room:

Beneath my chair
 Sit budge, a feathery bunch; upon its staves
 Polish thy clattering beak, etc.

Hurdis (1763-1801) was a Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, and Professor of Poetry. His first poem, *The Village Curate* (1788), had some little vogue. He is well characterised by Prof. Morfill (*Dict. Nat. Biog.*) 'a pale copy of Cowper,' for whom he more than once expresses the greatest admiration. His minute and genuine descriptions of nature may have attracted some notice from Wordsworth, in spite of his frigid Latinisms and prosaic style.

P. 114, l. 602. '*The dreadful appetite of death*':—I have hunted in vain for the source of this quotation.

P. 116, ll. 699-702. The planets are called 'Mercuries,' as Prof. Knight says, because they perform the functions of the messenger of the gods. The 'planetary five' are the planets known to us as Jupiter, Venus, Saturn, Mars, Mercury.

P. 117, l. 749. *Cephisus*:—xxxvii. The reference to this Attic river and to the custom spoken of is due to Pausanias (i. xxxvii. 3), of whose *Description of Greece* Wordsworth possessed Taylor's translation (1794). Cp. Prof. Knight's *Eversley Wordsworth*, vol. v. p. 396.

L. 764. *Wisely*:—Prof. Dowden's *Aldine Wordsworth* and Mr. Hutchinson's *Oxford Wordsworth* have 'widely,' a misprint not noticed in their lists of *Errata*. 'Widely' is in itself so plausible a variant that it seems worth while to state that the word is 'wisely' in the original ed. 1814, in ed. 1849-1850, and presumably in the intervening edd. It clearly leads on, also, to the question: 'But what is error?' and the following discussion.

P. 118, ll. 800-802. Prof. Knight cps. *King Henry the Sixth*, Part III. Act II., Sc. v., l. 23:

To sit upon a hill, as I do now,
To carve out dials quaintly, point by point,
Thereby to see the minutes how they run.

P. 121, l. 910. Saint Fillan (died *circa* 777?) was an Irish missionary in Scotland, and is associated especially with Ross and Killin in Perthshire (*Dict. Nat. Biog.*). Saint Anne here is the mother of the Blessed Virgin. Saint Giles (6th or 7th cent.) was supposed to be of royal Athenian descent. He devoted himself to a life of poverty and solitude in Provence, till he was called by the King of France to found a monastery in the place of his hermitage. He was regarded as the special patron of lepers and cripples, hence the church of St. Giles in the Cripplegate, London, and the leper hospital at St. Giles-in-the-Fields. St. Giles's Cathedral Church at Edinburgh once possessed a relic supposed to be an arm-bone of the saint. By a curious coincidence Wordsworth's counties of Westmoreland and Cumberland are the only two in England which possess no church dedicated to St. Giles. Cp. *Encyclopædia Brit.*

P. 122, l. 996. *The laughing Sage of France*:—Voltaire. The story of his visit to Paris in his eighty-fourth year, and his being crowned at the Comédie Française, is given, *e.g.*, in Morley's *Voltaire*, and in Prof. Knight's note on this passage from Longchamp et Wagnière, *Mémoires sur Voltaire*.

P. 125, l. 1130. The 'inferior Faculty' here is the Reason, unaided by Imagination or the imaginative faculties of 'Admiration, Hope, and Love.' Cp. l. 763 above, and the general trend of the argument, which is the fullest exposition of Wordsworth's philosophy.

P. 126, l. 1140. Landor thought that Wordsworth had plagiarised from his *Gebir* in this passage about the shell. In the Fenwick note to the *Evening Voluntary*, 'What mischief cleaves to unsubdued regret,' Wordsworth expresses his surprise at such an accusation, saying that he had 'scores of times,' in his early childhood at Cockermouth, listened to the sound of a sea-shell, and mentions the 'belief among us that we could know from the sound whether the tide was ebbing or flowing.' Cp. too Crabb Robinson's diary of the Italian tour of 1837 in Knight's

Life, III. (xi.) p. 273. The passage in *Gebir* (l. 159) is one of the most beautiful bits of Landor's exquisite work :

But I have sinuous shells of pearly hue
 Within, and they that lustre have imbibed
 In the sun's palace-porch, where when unyoked
 His chariot-wheel stands midway in the wave :
 Shake one, and it awakens, then apply
 Its polish'd lips to your attentive ear,
 And it remembers its august abodes,
 And murmurs as the ocean murmurs there.

P. 127, . 1187. Wordsworth refers to this passage in the Fenwick note to the *Evening Voluntary*, 'The leaves that rustled on this oak-crowned hill,' and to his frequent experience of the reverberation of the flying raven's voice. Prof. Knight quotes from Dorothy Wordsworth's *Journal*, July 27, 1800, the earliest account of it.

Ll. 1207-1274 were the second part of *The Excursion* to be written, 'either at Racedown or Alfoxden.'—I. F. cp. Bk. I. l. 871 note.

P. 132. BOOK FIFTH. THE PASTOR, l. 78. As Wordsworth explains in the Fenwick note, at this point 'as by the waving of a magic wand' the scene is changed from Little Langdale to the vale of Grasmere.

P. 133, l. 138. The verses which follow are in the main an accurate description of Grasmere church.

P. 137, ll. 318-320. Wordsworth refers to *Paradise Lost*, I. 157, where 'the Arch-Fiend' says to Beëlzebub :

Fallen Cherub, to be weak is miserable,
 Doing or suffering . . .

P. 139, l. 378. The note of interrogation at 'performance' is required by the sense, but, as far as I know, Prof. Knight's ed. is the only one which has hitherto printed it.

P. 140, l. 461. To illustrate the relation which in my mind this Pastor bore to the Wanderer, and the resemblance between them, or rather the points of community in their nature, I likened one to an oak and the other to a sycamore ; and, having here referred to this comparison, I need only add I had no one individual in my mind, wishing rather to embody this idea than to break in upon the simplicity of it by traits of individual character or of any peculiarity of opinion.—I. F.

P. 142, l. 529. I have ventured to restore 'forbidding,' the original reading, and that of all edd. of Wordsworth's lifetime, except those of 1820 and 1849-1850, which read 'forbidden.' 'Forbidden,' though it might be supported from a moral or religious point of view, is clearly inappropriate, as a careful reading of the context will show.

P. 145, l. 646 :—

Leo. You, Sir, could help me to the history
 Of half these graves ?

Priest. For eight-score winters past,
 With what I've witnessed, and with what I've heard,
 Perhaps I might; . . .
 By turning o'er these hillocks one by one,
 We two could travel, Sir, through a strange round;
 Yet all in the broad highway of the world.

See *The Brothers*.—W. Cp. vol. i. p. 149.

Ll. 656, 657. These two lines were first printed in italics in ed. 1827. Unless they are a quotation (from some source to me unknown), it is difficult to see any adequate reason for the exceptional treatment.

L. 679. 'Sight' of ed. 1849-1850, though retained by Prof. Dowden and Mr. Hutchinson, is clearly a misprint. The original ed. has 'site.' In this passage Wordsworth departs from the vale of Grasmere for the nonce, and describes the situation and inhabitants of the cottage of Hackett, at the south-east foot of Lingmoor in the Langdale. Cp. Fenwick note to *The Excursion* and to the *Epistle to Sir G. Beaumont*, referred to by Prof. Knight. Cp. too the Fenwick note to the *Miscellaneous Sonnets*, Part 1. No. viii.

P. 152, l. 975. '*Nature grieved, that one should die*':—

And suffering Nature grieved that one should die.

Southey's *Retrospect*.—W.

P. 154. BOOK SIXTH. THE CHURCHYARD AMONG THE MOUNTAINS, l. 19. '*Silent finger points to heaven*':—An instinctive taste teaches men to build their churches in flat countries with spire-steeples, which, as they cannot be referred to any other object, point as with silent finger to the sky and stars, and sometimes, when they reflect the brazen light of a rich though rainy sunset, appear like a pyramid of flame burning heavenward. See *The Friend*, by S. T. Coleridge, No. xiv. p. 223.—W.

P. 158, l. 211. His story is here truly related: he was a schoolfellow of mine for some years. He came to us when he was at least seventeen years of age, very tall, robust, and full grown. This prevented him from falling into the amusements and games of the school: consequently he gave more time to books. He was not remarkably bright or quick, but by industry he made a progress more than respectable. His parents not being wealthy enough to send him to college, when he left Hawkshead he became a schoolmaster, with a view to prepare himself for holy orders. About this time he fell in love as related in the poem, and everything followed as there described, except that I do not know when and where he died.—I. F.

P. 159, l. 254. The miner, next described as having found his treasure after twice ten years of labour, lived in Patterdale, and the story is true to the letter.—I. F.

P. 160, l. 273. Milton, *Comus*, 244.

Can any mortal mixture of earth's mould

Breathe such divine enchanting ravishment?—Prof. Knight.

L. 275. *He*:—The next character, to whom the Priest is led by contrast with the resoluteness displayed by the foregoing, is taken from a person born and bred in Grasmere, by name Dawson; and whose talents, disposition, and way of life were such as are here delineated.—I. F.

P. 163, l. 405. *A pair*:—Two individuals who, by their several misfortunes, were at different times driven to take refuge at the small and obscure town of Hawkshead, on the skirt of these mountains. Their stories I had from the dear old dame with whom, as a schoolboy an afterwards, I lodged for nearly the space of ten years. The elder, the Jacobite, was named Drummond, and was of a high family in Scotland: the Hanoverian Whig bore the name of Vandeput, and might perhaps be a descendant of some Dutchman who had come over in the train of King William. At all events his zeal was such that he ruined himself by a contest for the representation of London or Westminster, undertaken to support his party; and retired to this corner of the world, selected, as it had been by Drummond, for that obscurity which, since visiting the lakes became fashionable, it has no longer retained. So much was this region considered out of the way, till a late period, that persons who had fled from justice used often to resort hither for concealment; and some were so bold as to, not unfrequently, make excursions from the place of their retreat, for the purpose of committing fresh offences. Such was particularly the case with two brothers of the name of Weston, who took up their abode at Old Brathay, I think about seventy years ago. They were highwaymen, and lived there some time without being discovered, though it was known that they often disappeared in a way and upon errands which could not be accounted for. Their horses were noticed as being of a choice breed, and I have heard from the Ralph family, one of whom was a saddler in the town of Kendal, that they were curious in their saddles and housings and accoutrements of their horses. They, as I have heard, and as was universally believed, were in the end both taken and hanged.—I. F.

P. 165, ll. 532, 533. '*Too quick a sense of constant infelicity*':—Cp. Jeremy Taylor, *Holy Dying*, i. v. 2.—'If we could but hear . . . how many people there are that weep with want, and are mad with oppression, or are desperate by too quick a sense of constant infelicity.'—Prof. Knight.

Ll. 539-544. Prometheus was chained to a rock for stealing fire from heaven as a gift for mankind. Tantalus was punished, for revealing the secrets of his father Zeus, by being placed in a lake, the waters of which constantly withdrew from his mouth when he attempted to drink. The hereditary curse descended upon his grandchildren Atreus and Thyestes, and their descendants Agamemnon, Ægisthus, Electra, Orestes. 'The dark sorrows of the line of Thebes' refers to the story of Œdipus, who unwittingly slew his father Laius and married his mother Jocasta, and whose sons Eteocles and Polynices slew one another in the war of the

Seven against Thebes, while his daughter Antigone was put to death for giving burial to Polynices contrary to the edict of Creon.

P. 167, l. 608. Prof. Knight refers to the Fenwick note on the *Epistle to Sir G. Beaumont*, where Wordsworth speaks of this passage and speaks of Grasmere churchyard as losing, 'during late years,' 'much of its rustic simplicity by the introduction of iron palisades to fence off family burying-grounds, and by numerous monuments, some of them in very bad taste; from which this place of burial was in my memory quite free.' Unfortunately human vandalism has made it necessary to fence off the 'poet's corner' of Grasmere churchyard with 'palisades' such as Wordsworth deplored.

P. 171, l. 777. This person lived at Town-End, and was almost our next neighbour.—I. F.

P. 174, l. 905. *Hamlet*, III. i. 72. 'The pangs of despised love, the law's delay.'—Prof. Knight.

P. 177, l. 1052. The story . . . was told to Mrs. Wordsworth and my sister by the sister of this unhappy young woman; and every particular was exactly as I have related.—I. F.

P. 178, ll. 1085-1093 were in ed. 1827 substituted for a passage of twenty-eight lines, describing more in detail the circumstances and nature of the man's sin.

P. 180, l. 1191. In ed. 1827 was cancelled a passage of seventy-six lines, describing another group of graves, in which a man and his two successive wives were laid. Wordsworth, whether from his own thoughts or from external influences, came to regard second marriages with disfavour. Thus the Wanderer was originally given a stepfather in a passage, following Bk. I. l. 110, which was cancelled in ed. 1827.

P. 182. BOOK SEVENTH. THE CHURCHYARD AMONG THE MOUNTAINS—(Continued), l. 55. *That lowly Parsonage*:—'The cottage in which the parson of Wytheburn then lived still stands on the right or eastern side of the road, as you ascend the [Dunmail] Raise, beyond the Swan Inn. It abuts on the public road about 300 yards beyond the bridge over Tongue Ghyll beck.'—Prof. Knight. The Clergyman and his family . . . were, during many years, our principal associates in the vale of Grasmere, unless I were to except our very nearest neighbours. I have entered so particularly into the main points of their history, that I will barely testify in prose that—with the single exception of the particulars of their journey to Grasmere, which, however, was exactly copied from real life in another instance—the whole that I have said of them is as faithful to the truth as words can make it. There was much talent in the family; the eldest son was distinguished for poetical talent, of which a specimen is given in my notes to the sonnets to the Duddon.—I. F. Cp. *The River Duddon*, vi. 10, and note, vol. II. p. 503.

P. 184, l. 176. 'Upon' was substituted in ed. 1845 for the more natural 'on.' It is not obvious why the change was made, unless Wordsworth

wanted to express the notion of flashing light by quickening the pronunciation of the word 'glittered.' It is true that Wordsworth from time to time, especially in ed. 1836, gave greater body, as it were, to his verse by interpolating extra syllables (cp. as one instance out of many, l. 336 of this book, where, in 1836, he substituted 'between' for 'twixt'); but, while the matter is not one for dogmatism, I do not feel that the line under consideration was altered merely for that reason. In Book VIII. (The Parsonage), l. 304, we have an instance of the desire to strengthen the verse, not merely for the sake of a stronger verse, but partly to suit the sense of the words. The original—

When the wind is up

Among the clouds and in the ancient woods,
was altered in ed. 1836 to—

. . . and roars through the ancient woods :

whereas, ten lines further on, 'or a blush' was substituted in ed. 1836 for 'or blush' of the earlier text, merely to strengthen the rhythm.

P. 186, l. 241. Eighteen lines following l. 241 were omitted in 1827.

P. 187, ll. 316-317. *A Priest abides before whose life such doubts fall to the ground*:—For this character cp. Additional Note, vol. II. p. 539, *Memoir of the Rev. Robert Walker*.

P. 191, l. 481. . . . The deaf man, whose epitaph may be seen in the churchyard at the head of Haweswater, and whose qualities of mind and heart, and their benign influence in conjunction with his privation, I had from his relatives on the spot.—I. F.

P. 192, l. 515. The Blind Man was John Gough, of Kendal, a man known, far beyond his neighbourhood, for his talents and attainments in natural history and science.—I. F. He did not die till 1825, eleven years after *The Excursion* was published; but there was of course no mention of his name in the poem or in any note until the Fenwick notes of ed. 1857. He was a very remarkable man. Blinded by smallpox before he was three years old, he still became a student of poetry, mathematics, natural science, and natural history. 'Handling plants rapidly from their roots or stalks upwards, examining the stamens and pistils within the flower with the tip of his tongue, and detecting the finest hairs with his lower lip, he could even recognise plants not before examined by him from the descriptions he had heard' (*Dict. Nat. Biog.*). This latter feat he performed with regard to the Moss Champion, described by Wordsworth in the *Elegiac Verses in Memory of my Brother*, etc. 'This poem,' says Prof. Knight, 'was read to Gough in 1805 (it was not published till 1842), and twelve years afterwards, in 1817, a specimen of the Moss Champion was placed in his hand, and he said at once, "I have never examined this plant before, but it is *Silene Acaulis*."'

L. 536. '*Married to immortal verse*':—Milton, *L' Allegro*, l. 137.

P. 193, l. 573. It is the years which are possessed in this light-hearted manner by the old man.

P. 194, ll. 616, 617 :—

This Sycamore oft musical with Bees ;
Such Tents the Patriarchs loved.

—S. T. Coleridge.

[*Inscription for a Fountain on a Heath.*]—W.

P. 195, l. 635. Of the Infant's grave, next noticed, I will only say it is an exact picture of what fell under my own observation ; and all persons who are intimately acquainted with cottage life must often have observed like instances of the working of the domestic affections.—I. F.

L. 636, 637. 'This refers to the Greens, a very ancient Grasmere family, settled for generations at Pavement End, which, with a considerable tract of land, is still their property.'—Dr. Cradock, in Prof. Knight's *Eversley* edition.

P. 197, l. 751. *Glead* :—More usually glede or gled, is a name, chiefly north-country, for the Kite.

P. 199, l. 848. '*All hoping and expecting all*' :—Cp. 1 Cor. xiii. 7.

P. 200, l. 890. This young volunteer bore the name of Dawson, and was younger brother, if I am not mistaken, to the prodigal, of whose character and fortunes an account is given towards the beginning of the preceding book. The father of the family I knew well ; he was a man of literary education and of experience in society much beyond what was common among the inhabitants of the vale. He had lived a good while in the Highlands of Scotland, as a manager of iron-works at Bunaw, and had acted as clerk to one of my predecessors in the office of Distributor of Stamps, when he used to travel round the country collecting and bringing home the money due to Government, in gold, which, it may be worth while to mention for the sake of my friends, was deposited in the cell or iron closet under the west window of the long room at Rydal Mount, which still exists, with the iron doors that guarded the property. This of course was before the time of Bills and Notes. The two sons of this person had no doubt been led by the knowledge of their father to take more delight in scholarship, and had been accustomed in their own minds to take a wider view of social interests, than was usual among their associates. The premature death of this gallant young man was much lamented, and, as an attendant at the funeral, I myself witnessed the ceremony and the effect of it, as described in the poem.—I. F.

P. 202, l. 958. The pillars of the gateway in front of the mansion remained when we first took up our abode at Grasmere. Two or three cottages still remain, which are called Knotthouses from the name of the gentleman (I have called him a knight) concerning whom these traditions survive. He was the ancestor of the Knott family, formerly considerable proprietors in the district. What follows in the discourse of the Wanderer upon the changes he had witnessed in rural life, by the introduction of machinery, is truly described from what I myself saw during my boyhood and early youth, and from what was often told me by persons of

this humble calling. Happily, most happily, for these mountains, the mischief was diverted from the banks of their beautiful streams, and was transferred to open and flat countries abounding in coal, where the agency of steam was found much more effectual for carrying on those demoralising works. Had it not been for this invention, long before the present time every torrent and river in this district would have had its factory, large and populous in proportion to the power of the water that could there have been commanded.—I. F.

L. 980. The 'Transit gloria mundi' is finely expressed in the Introduction to the Foundation-charters of some of the ancient Abbeys. Some expressions here used are taken from that of the Abbey of St. Mary's, Furness, the translation of which is as follows: 'Considering every day the uncertainty of life, that the roses and flowers of Kings, Emperors, and Dukes, and the crowns and palms of all the great, wither and decay; and that all things, with an uninterrupted course, tend to dissolution and death: I therefore,' etc.—W.

P. 207. BOOK EIGHTH. THE PARSONAGE, l. 100. *Thorpe and vill*:—Homestead and small house. Cp. *Ecclesiastical Sonnets*, Pt. i. No. xxii.

L. 112. In treating this subject, it was impossible not to recollect, with gratitude, the pleasing picture, which, in his Poem of the Fleece, the excellent and amiable Dyer has given of the influences of manufacturing industry upon the face of this Island. He wrote at a time when machinery was first beginning to be introduced, and his benevolent heart prompted him to augur from it nothing but good. Truth has compelled me to dwell upon the baneful effects arising out of an ill-regulated and excessive application of powers so admirable in themselves.—W.

In the following lines Wordsworth seems to be referring to canals. The latter part of the eighteenth century was the time in which canal navigation was practically revived in England. Ll. 115-116 are difficult and yet are apparently the result of an attempt to make the passage clearer than it originally was, for till ed. 1836 it stood as one line—

Or on the naked mountain's lofty side.

The picture suggested is undoubtedly the somewhat strange one of a canal high up on a mountain side, but Wordsworth doubtless merely refers to a situation in which a canal is, in a mountainous region, higher than some parts of the valley, across which it is sometimes carried by an aqueduct.

P. 209, l. 221. The hint for this description comes from Cicero (*Tusculan Disputations*, v. 23), who says that when he was Quæstor in Sicily he found the tomb of Archimedes, buried in brambles, etc., and forgotten by the Syracusans themselves.

P. 211, l. 304. Cp. Bk. vii. (The Churchyard) l. 170 note.

P. 212, l. 323. The use of 'its' in this line and 'her' in the next

is probably due to an oversight in altering the text, which originally ran—

The limbs increase; but, liberty of mind
Thus gone for ever, this organic Frame,
Which from heaven's bounty we receive, instinct
With light, and gladsome motions, soon becomes
Dull, to the joy of her own motions dead;
And even the touch, so exquisitely poured
Through the whole body, with a languid will
Performs *its* functions.

In ed. 1827 Wordsworth wrote—

The limbs increase; but liberty of mind
Is gone for ever; this organic Frame
So joyful in *her* motions, is become
Dull, to the joy of her own motions dead;
And even the touch, so exquisitely poured
Through the whole body, with a languid will
Performs *her* functions.

In ed. 1836 *her* (I have italicised merely for the purpose of this note) was in ll. 323, 327 changed to *its*, while in l. 324 no change was made. It is very improbable that Wordsworth was consciously imitating the old confusion, such as we find in 1 Cor. xiii. 5: 'Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own.'

P. 214, l. 413. The Christ-cross-row means the alphabet, from the custom of prefixing a cross to the alphabet in the old horn-books.

P. 222. BOOK NINTH. DISCOURSE OF THE WANDERER, ETC., l. 151. *Paradise Lost*, iii. 44, 'Human face divine.'

P. 225, l. 299. The discovery of Dr. Bell affords marvellous facilities for carrying this into effect; and it is impossible to overrate the benefit which might accrue to humanity from the universal application of this simple engine under an enlightened and conscientious government.—W. This 'discovery' of Andrew Bell (1753-1832) was the germ of the system of 'pupil-teachers.' As superintendent of the Madras Male Orphan Asylum, Bell, partly from the difficulty of finding and paying masters, introduced the practice of the children teaching one another. One of the earliest places to use his system was Kendal in its industrial schools. Bell was not a little of a quack, but he obtained great celebrity, and, in consequence of his rivalry with the Quaker, Joseph Lancaster, became the great champion and propagator of Church Schools. Coleridge and Wordsworth, and especially Southey, were enthusiastic supporters of Bell; and Southey wrote a part of his *Life*, which his son, Cuthbert Southey, finished. Cp. *Dict. Nat. Biog.*

L. 307. Originally 'To drudge through weary life without the help.' Altered in ed. 1836. Cp. note on Bk. vii. (Churchyard) l. 176.

P. 226, l. 336. Calpe is described by Prof. Knight as 'a promontory

in Valencia, facing the Balearic Isles.' There is an unimportant place of the name in that situation, but Wordsworth refers to Gibraltar, of which the ancient name was Calpe.

L. 364. Wordsworth refers to the famous doctrines of Malthus, whose *Principle of Population* was first published in 1798, and had been republished several times before Wordsworth wrote *The Excursion*.

P. 231, l. 570. The scene is in the main described as if the party go to the Terrace on Loughrigg, immediately above the south end of Grasmere, but, as usual, Wordsworth allows himself to add to and alter the actual scenery.

P. 234, l. 704. Taranis is the name of a Celtic god, probably 'the Thunderer,' mentioned by Lucan, *Pharsalia*, i. 446:

Et Taranis Scythicae non mitior ara Dianae.

Cp. S. Reinach in *Revue Celtique*, vol. xviii. p. 137.

P. 235, l. 750. Cp. *Paradise Lost*, v. 202. Witness if I be silent, morn or even.—Prof. Knight.

L. 777. When I reported this promise of the Solitary, and long after, it was my wish, and I might say intention, that we should resume our wanderings, and pass the Borders into his native country, where, as I hoped, he might witness, in the society of the Wanderer, some religious ceremony—a sacrament, say, in the open fields, or a preaching among the mountains—which, by recalling to his mind the days of his early childhood, when he had been present on such occasions in company with his parents and nearest kindred, might have dissolved his heart into tenderness, and so have done more towards restoring the Christian faith in which he had been educated, and, with that, contentedness and even cheerfulness of mind, than all that the Wanderer and Pastor, by their several effusions and addresses, had been able to effect. An issue like this was in my intentions. But, alas!

Mid the wreck of is and was,
Things incomplete and purposes betrayed
Make sadder transits o'er thought's optic glass
Than noblest objects utterly decayed.—I. F.

THE PRELUDE

P. 237. During the poet's lifetime this poem remained unpublished, owing partly to the diffidence with which he regarded it, especially on account of its length, but partly no doubt to his sense of having failed to complete the great work, *The Recluse*, to which this autobiographical poem was to have been, in his own words, 'a sort of *portico*.' The title was suggested by Mrs. Wordsworth, when the poem was first edited in 1850 by Mr. Carter, who had been Wordsworth's secretary and was one of his literary executors.

ADVERTISEMENT, l. 2. The opening lines, the 'glad preamble,' as Wordsworth calls them (*Prelude*, vii. 4), were composed as Wordsworth

was coming home from Goslar in 1799. The rest of Bks. I. and II. was finished, in all probability, by the end of 1800, from which time to Feb. 1804 the stream of composition 'stopped' (*ibid.* VII. 11), though Wordsworth must have occasionally worked at the poem in the interval (Dorothy Wordsworth, *Journal*, Jan. 11, 1803: 'William was working at his poem to C[oleridge].') Bks. III.-XIV. were written between the beginning of 1804 and the latter part of May 1805. Cp. Mr. Hutchinson's *Oxford Wordsworth*, 'Chronological Table.' The facts are collected in Prof. Knight's *Eversley* ed., but with more than one unfortunate error.

P. 239. BOOK FIRST. INTRODUCTION—CHILDHOOD AND SCHOOL-TIME, l. 46. *O Friend*:—Coleridge: see *Advertisement* above. The 'day spoken of in this passage was that on which Wordsworth left Goslar in April 1799: cp. *Prelude*, Bk. VII. 1 foll. On that day the first forty-five lines of *The Prelude* were composed. But neither in these nor in the following lines to l. 107 is Wordsworth giving a strictly accurate statement of facts. This idealisation, Wordsworth's obvious and avowed practice in *The Excursion*, seems to me rather unexpected in so faithfully autobiographical a poem as *The Prelude*; and the statement in ll. 90 foll. that Wordsworth, in an hour of exaltation, actually started for his 'chosen Vale' without any preparation, is, if untrue, somewhat unfortunate, as the fact—if fact it were—would be a striking illustration of that more wayward side of the poet's nature which the general body of readers usually fails to realise. I have attempted therefore to harmonise the passage with the known facts, but without success; and I cannot do better than quote Mr. Hutchinson's opinion, which he very kindly wrote to me, and which is, I think, convincing. 'I am quite convinced that Wordsworth here (ll. 1-113) gives us an idealised account of his past history, blending together three events in his life: (1) his release from London in the autumn of 1795, on the receipt of Raisley Calvert's legacy; (2) his final departure from Goslar for England, probably late in April 1799; (3) his journey with Dorothy from Sockburn to Grasmere at the close of 1799. The feelings described in ll. 6-45 must be those which possessed Wordsworth when, in the autumn of 1795, having invested Raisley Calvert's legacy (part of which he seems to have lent to Basil Montagu) and having obtained one pupil (Basil junior) and the promise of another (a son of Mr. Pinney of Bristol, aged thirteen), he turned his back on London and set out for Bristol (where shortly afterwards he seems to have met Coleridge for the first time at Mr. Pinney's house), and took possession of Racedown House. *The Prelude* was certainly begun during Wordsworth's stay in Germany, and ll. 1-45, or, as you suggest, a rough draft of them, were composed on the day of his departure from Goslar. Wordsworth's own words in *Prelude* VII. 1 foll. settle this, I think; for *Prelude* VII. 1-42 were written in the autumn of 1804, five and a half, or roughly six, years after that event. Wordsworth seems to compress his past experience within such

limits as the exigencies of his verse demanded. Thus he treats his three successive *Departures* as one—that from “the vast city” (London) in 1795, that from Goslar in the spring of 1799, and that from Sockburn with Dorothy in Dec. 1799. Wordsworth’s “liberty” unquestionably first came to him on the occasion of the first of these departures, but it was not finally consummated till his settlement in the “known Vale” (*Prelude*, l. 72) in Dec. 1799. The two cardinal facts in his past life which he wants to impress upon the readers are (1) his detention, a “discontented sojourner” in the “vast city,”

amid the many shapes—
Of joyless daylight; when the fretful stir
Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,
Have hung upon the beatings of my heart.

(*Tintern Abbey*, 52-54),

and (2) his release and subsequent settlement in the valley of his boyish choice. All that intervened between these two momentous events he passes over in this summary (*Prelude*, l. 1-113).’

P. 240, l. 93. As will be seen from the last note, this statement can hardly be literally true. At least there is no record of such a journey, and the description (l. 106) ‘a pleasant loitering journey, through three days continued,’ seems to refer to the actual journey, made with Dorothy, in Dec. 1799.

Ll. 99, 100. ‘*Be it so; why think of anything but present good?*’—Prof. Knight says: ‘This quotation I am unable to trace.’ Surely it is merely a soliloquy of the poet himself.

P. 241, l. 143. This passage bears an intimate relation to the *Stanzas written in my Pocket-copy of Thomson’s ‘Castle of Indolence,’* and is in itself a strong support of the interpretation of that poem given above, vol. i. p. 502.

P. 242, l. 206. *How that one Frenchman*:—Dominique de Gourgues, a French gentleman who went in 1568 to Florida to avenge the massacre of the French by the Spaniards there. Ed. 1850.

P. 244, l. 283. *Those towers*:—Cockermouth Castle.

L. 304. *That beloved Vale*:—Esthwaite, in which is the village of Hawkshead, where Wordsworth was at school. Cp. *Introd.*

P. 245, l. 309. By the autumnal crocus Wordsworth no doubt indicates the plant *Colchicum autumnale*, variously known as ‘autumn crocus’ and ‘meadow saffron.’

L. 329. By ‘the end’ here Wordsworth seems to mean, not the end proposed by himself, but the actual result or the end proposed by Nature. Their ‘object’ was the ‘mean and inglorious’ one of taking birds’ nests, but the means employed were so full of adventure and spiritual excitement that the result was important in his imaginative development and not ‘ignoble.’ Cp. a few lines below (350):

Praise to the end!

Thanks to the means which Nature deigned to employ!

P. 246, l. 359. *Rocky cave*:—‘Dr. Cradock suggested the reading “rocky cove.”’—Knight. Certainly it is difficult to understand how a boat on Esthwaite water could be tied to a willow in a cave.

L. 371. *Far above*:—Here, too, I believe an ‘a’ has wrongly supplanted an ‘o,’ and that Wordsworth wrote ‘for above’: the craggy ridge was the highest object in sight except the stars and sky, and therefore ‘the horizon’s utmost boundary.’

L. 378. *A huge peak, black and huge*:—Probably Wetherlam.

P. 247. This passage, ll. 401-463, was originally published in *The Friend*. See above, vol. i. p. 134.

P. 248, l. 444. *Of melancholy not unnoticed, while the stars*:—This line was doubtless not intended to be read as an Alexandrine. One may compare Wordsworth’s constant treatment of the word ‘spiritual’ as equivalent to a dissyllable.

L. 455. ‘Still’ is used here, as elsewhere in Wordsworth (cp. above, l. 364 of this book, and *An Evening Walk*, l. 48), for ‘all the while,’ ‘continuously.’ Cp. Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, i. ii. 229: ‘the still-vex’d Bermoothes.’

P. 249, l. 522. Cp. Pope, *Rape of the Lock*, iii. 54:

Gained but one trump and one plebeian card.—Prof. Knight. The diamonds are called ‘ironic’ in l. 525, doubtless because they were, through much use, so much the reverse of bright.

P. 251, l. 584. ‘Works along the blood’ is one of those phrases which from time to time saliently remind us of what the careful reader of Wordsworth and of Tennyson is constantly, though less distinctly, conscious,—that the later poet learned much of the earlier before he surpassed him as an artist in phrase and rhythm. Cp. *Lines composed above Tintern Abbey*, l. 28:

Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart.

P. 254. BOOK SECOND. SCHOOL-TIME (*continued*), ll. 90, 91:—The ed. of 1850 reads:

or by a river side

Or shady fountains.

Mr. Hutchinson perceived that Wordsworth meant ‘by the side of a river or of a shady fountain,’ and accordingly prints

or by a river’s side

Or shady fountain’s.

I gladly accept ‘fountain’s,’ but I think, in spite of the slight inconsistency of form, ‘river side,’ being a common expression for ‘side of a river,’ is preferable to ‘river’s side.’ It is indeed not very unlikely that we should read ‘fountain.’ The ‘s’ might easily be a printer’s error, and its removal is, I think, an improvement. For the expression ‘river side’ in Wordsworth—if it needs illustration—cp. this poem, Bk. v. l. 340: ‘the river sides are all forlorn.’

L. 103. *That large abbey*:—Furness Abbey. The Druid Circle referred to in the previous line was probably at Conishead Priory on the Cartmell Sands.—Prof. Knight.

P. 255, l. 140. *A tavern stood*:—The White Lion Inn at Bowness.

P. 256, l. 168. *The Minstrel of the Troop*:—Robert Greenwood, afterwards Senior Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge.—Prof. Knight.

P. 257, l. 214. *A succedaneum*:—*I.e.* a substitute.

L. 222. *And thou wilt doubt*:—*I.e.* Coleridge, like Wordsworth, will doubt the possibility of tracing with scientific precision the stages of the mind's history.

P. 259, l. 295. '*Best society*':—Alluding, of course, to *Paradise Lost*, ix. 249: 'For solitude sometimes is best society.'

P. 260, l. 333. *A Friend*:—'The late Rev. John Fleming of Rayrigg, Windermere.'—Ed. 1850. Prof. Knight says that the friend may have been the Rev. Charles Farish, author of *The Minstrels of Winandermere*, and *Black Agnes*.

P. 262, ll. 451, 452. *Thou, my Friend! wert reared in the great city*:—The same expression occurs in Coleridge's *Frost at Midnight*, l. 51 (written Feb. 1798):

I was reared

In the great city.

Coleridge was at school at Christ's Hospital.

P. 265. BOOK THIRD. RESIDENCE AT CAMBRIDGE, l. 104. In edd. 1850, 1851, after the words '*to be changed*,' the passage continued:

in manhood's prime;
Or for the few who shall be called to look
On the long shadows in our evening years,
Ordained precursors to the night of death.
As if awakened . . .

The text, as given above, was substituted without comment in ed. 1857, and is adopted by Prof. Dowden and Mr. Hutchinson. Prof. Knight gives the text of 1850 without quoting the variation. The text of 1850 is grammatically inaccurate and obscure, though its general sense is clear enough. Presumably Mr. Carter had some MS. authority for the alteration. The cancelled lines have to me an air of coming from somewhere else; but, if so, I cannot recall the place.

P. 267, l. 188. The thought here is not quite easy to follow; it may be paraphrased thus: 'Most of my early spiritual experience lies far hidden from the reach of words; for points have we all of us within our souls where all stand single. This I feel, and I know that in attempting to describe such experience I am attempting to give utterance to powers which cannot be communicated to others. But since every one remembers his own past, I am not dejected at the thought of the incommunicability of my soul's experience, as others will at any rate be reminded of their own spiritual past and their "godlike hours." In

editions previous to Prof. Knight's, the sense was slightly obscured by a comma instead of a note of interrogation at 'himself,' l. 188.

P. 269, ll. 275, 276. Cp. Chaucer, *Reve's Tale*, of which the scene is laid at this mill, 'At Trumpington, nat fer fro Cantebrigge.'

L. 280. *Sweet Spenser*:—Spenser was at Pembroke Hall (now College), Milton at Christ's.

P. 272, ll. 417-422. The meaning of this passage, which is not at first sight clear, is that compulsory attendance at chapel brings the 'just authority' of science (*i.e.* learning), in other words compulsory lectures, into a discredit resembling its own; people who suspect religion of being a solemn mockery proceed to think the same of learning.

P. 273, l. 474. Alluding to the story of the general Belisarius, who was reduced in his old age to beg the alms of passers-by: *date obolum Belisario*.

P. 277. BOOK FOURTH. SUMMER VACATION, l. 28. *My old Dame*:—Anne Tyson was the dame in whose cottage Wordsworth boarded while attending school at Hawkshead.

P. 279, l. 84. I have inserted a note of interrogation here as the simplest way of making sense of the passage. Prof. Knight would arrive at the same result by substituting 'nor' for 'and' in l. 78.

P. 284, l. 328. *Grain-tinctured*:—*I.e.* coloured as if with dyes.

P. 285, l. 378. Cp. 'This lawn, a carpet all alive,' l. 6, vol. II., p. 363, and note.

P. 288. BOOK FIFTH. BOOKS, l. 26. '*Weep to have*':—Shakespeare, *Sonnets*, LXIV., last line.

P. 291, ll. 169, 170. All previous editions punctuate . . . 'unpraised, even in the time of lisping infancy; and,' etc., but the passage seems unintelligible so punctuated. Wordsworth means: 'Great must have been the power of nature if it could keep me all this time from speaking of the guidance and help obtained from books. While I was, in the previous books of *The Prelude*, recalling the days even of lisping infancy and of prattling childhood, how could I play the ingrate so far as to omit the record of what books were to me even in those periods?'

P. 292, l. 200. *Whether by native prose, or numerous verse*:—*Paradise Lost*, v. 150. 'In prose or numerous [*i.e.* rhythmical] verse.'

P. 295, l. 363. If this passage be compared with *The Excursion*, Bk. ix. (Discourse), ll. 293 foll., in which universal compulsory education is eloquently advocated, a certain difference of point of view will be felt; but there is no deep-seated inconsistency. Wordsworth is here referring to nursery days, there to subsequent years of childhood and youth.

Ll. 364-397 were published separately in the second ed. of *Lyrical Ballads* (1800). Cp. vol. I. p. 305 above.

P. 296, l. 400. *The thronèd Lady whom erewhile we hailed*:—Above, Bk. IV. l. 22.

P. 299, l. 528. I have removed the comma hitherto printed after 'wish,' as it obscured the sense and might lead to misinterpretation.

P. 300, l. 596. If the text is correct, the expression 'the viewless winds' must be a somewhat violent metaphor for the 'spirit' or 'thoughts' of poets. The general sense of the passage is clearly this, that language, as employed by poets, is a medium which has a mysterious power of transfiguring the ordinary objects of experience, of bringing before the mind ideas and pictures which transcend our ordinary experience, and of suggesting more than it can be literally shown to mean. I must confess that the sense would appear to me more satisfactorily expressed if Wordsworth wrote 'the motions of the viewless *mind*, embodied in the mystery of words'; and it is not impossible that he did so write. 'Viewless winds' as a familiar phrase might easily supplant the other.

P. 305. BOOK SIXTH. CAMBRIDGE AND THE ALPS, l. 182. '*Good-natured lounging*':—Thomson, *Castle of Indolence*, i. stanza 15.

Ll. 197, 198. *Seemed another morn risen on mid noon.* *Paradise Lost*, v. 310: 'Seems another morn risen on mid-noon.'—Prof. Knight.

L. 201. It is possible that Wordsworth was, as Prof. Knight suggests, thinking partly of the period between the winter of 1790-1791 and early in 1794, as that of 'separation' from his sister; but, though no doubt they met in his school holidays, the Long Vacation of 1789, spent mostly at Penrith, is described in the text, and it might well be that the previous years since their father's death in 1783 seemed on the whole a period of 'separation desolate'; the sister at any rate had much loneliness and other discomforts to bear.

L. 205. *That monastic castle*:—Brougham Castle.

P. 306, l. 224. *Another maid there was*:—Mary Hutchinson, afterwards the poet's wife.

L. 236. *The spirit of pleasure, and youth's golden gleam*:—This line is repeated (with 'a' for 'the') in Bk. XII. 266, in a passage directly referring to this one.

L. 251. *Gales Etesian*:—The Etesian or 'annual' winds of the Mediterranean blow for about forty-five days in summer from the north-west.

L. 261. *For whom it registers the birth, and marks the growth.* This is the only Alexandrine in *The Prelude*; and, as it has clearly no rhythmical purpose, it is probably due to an oversight. Possibly the words 'for whom' should be added to the preceding line, which should still be read as a verse of five feet, such slurring as is required being common enough in Wordsworth; or perhaps the words 'marks the' should be omitted.

P. 307, l. 268. *That wide edifice, thy school and home*:—Christ's Hospital.

Ll. 281, 282. Coleridge, after winning the Brown gold medal for a Sapphic Ode and otherwise beginning his undergraduate life 'in temper-

ance and peace, a rigorous student,' became more and more excited with radical politics and religious speculations, got into conflict with the authorities and into debt, and ran away from Cambridge in a fit of despondency and enlisted in a regiment of Dragoons. He managed to get out of this in about two months, and returned to Cambridge, soon to be deep, with Southey, in the scheme of Pantisocracy and emigration to the American backwoods. Cp. J. Dykes Campbell's *Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ch. ii.

P. 308, l. 323. *A youthful friend*:—Robert Jones. Cp. vol. i. p. 12, *Descriptive Sketches*, a poem produced as the result of this tour, of which there are many echoes in this part of *The Prelude*.

L. 340. *France standing on the top of golden hours*:—Shakespeare's *Sonnets*, No. xvi. :

Now stand you on the top of happy hours.

For Wordsworth and the French Revolution cp. *Introduction* and *Sonnets Dedicated to National Independence and Liberty*.

P. 310, l. 425. This was an error on Wordsworth's part: the soldiers were on nothing more than a domiciliary visit. The monastery was not seized till two years later, in 1792, the year of Wordsworth's *Descriptive Sketches*, in which the same incident is treated in lines in many respects similar to these. Cp. *Descriptive Sketches*, ll. 52 foll.

L. 439. Cp. *Descriptive Sketches*, l. 72.

P. 311, ll. 464, 465 are obscure. They must be intended as a description of the mountain-tops, which are 'cerulean ether's pure inhabitants,' and, apparently, shapes which have survived, untransmuted, many transmutations of the earth. Cp. Coleridge's *Hymn before Sunrise in the Vale of Chamouni*, ll. 10 foll. (of the sky around the top of Mt. Blanc):

But when I look again,

It is thine own calm home, thy crystal shrine,

Thy habitation from eternity!

P. 312, l. 528. Cp. *Yarrow Unvisited*, ll. 49-56, vol. ii. p. 19.

P. 314, l. 592. Light is thrown on this rather difficult passage by many other passages in Wordsworth's poems, in which he speaks of moments of a kind of ecstasy, in which the senses, having done their part of receiving impressions from beautiful or awful objects, make way for this mysterious imagination or consciousness of sublimity or aspiration after infinitude. Cp. especially the *Lines composed a few miles above Tintern Abbey*, 35-49, and *Prelude*, ii. 311-322.

Ll. 621 (Brook and road) to 640 were published among the *Poems of the Imagination* in 1845. Cp. vol. i. p. 310.

L. 629. *The torrents shooting from the clear blue sky*:—This line is taken from *Descriptive Sketches*, l. 113.

Ll. 631, 632. *Black drizzling crags that spake by the way-side as if a voice were in them*:—Cp. *Descriptive Sketches* in the original ed., ll. 249-250:

Black drizzling craggs that, beaten by the din,

Vibrate, as if a voice complained within.

P. 315, l. 652. This seems to me a lapse into incongruity of expression most unusual in Wordsworth. I can only account for it by supposing that he wished to convey two notions, both suggested by the actual appearance of the river, but scarcely able to be entertained as one composite notion.

Ll. 671, 672. *I strove to chant your praise* :—In the *Descriptive Sketches*.

P. 316, l. 713. I have punctuated as in the text instead of placing only a semi-colon at 'woods,' as other edd. following ed. 1850. Ed. 1857 places a colon at 'woods,' evidently with a view to showing that the objects thereafter mentioned form the subject taken up at l. 723 in 'these.' The same purpose is more effectually served by means of a full stop.

P. 318. BOOK SEVENTH. RESIDENCE IN LONDON, l. 3. *The City's walls* :—The City of Goslar in Lower Saxony. Cp. above, pp. 566-7, notes.

P. 319, l. 44. *My favourite grove* :—'Doubtless John's Grove, below White Moss Common.'—Prof. Knight. Cp. the poem *When to the attractions of the busy world*, etc., vol. I. p. 239.

L. 52. *Returned from that excursion* :—That is, the visit to Switzerland.

P. 321, ll. 161-163. In all previous editions there has been only a comma at 'toe' and a semi-colon at 'saints,' l. 162 being thus connected with the preceding words, and an incredibly confused image of a title-page and guardian saints being produced. The passage would be improved if l. 162 were transposed after l. 163; but as there is no other instance of such a transposition in Wordsworth's text, I have adopted the neat suggestion of Mr. Hutchinson, and by altering the punctuation have made the sentence clear in meaning, though not very attractive in form.

P. 322, l. 193. Mr. Hutchinson has referred me to Mrs. Cowden-Clarke, *My Long Life*, p. 2: 'The railing adjacent to the gate [Cumberland Gate, now the Marble Arch] was, at that period [about 1812], permitted to be strung with rows of printed old-fashioned ballads, such as 'Cruel Barbara Allen,' etc.

L. 194-198. The distinction here, as Mr. Hutchinson pointed out to me, is between advertisements which are frankly such, and advertisements (such as are common enough now) which begin with what professes to be some disinterested piece of information. No doubt Wordsworth had some particular one in his mind which began with some particular 'most imposing word'; but only the most remote chance could now disclose it to us.

P. 324, ll. 283, 284. *'As the moon hid in her vacant interlunar cave'* :—Milton, *Samson Agonistes*, 88, 89.

L. 288. *'Forms and pressures of the time'* :—*Hamlet*, I. v. 100.

L. 294. *The daring brotherhood* :—*I.e.* in more modern parlance, 'the theatrical fraternity.' The story of the maid of Buttermere was both dramatised and later made the subject of a novel. It first appeared in

some letters of Coleridge to *The Morning Post*, October 1802, reprinted in the posthumous *Essays on his own Times*, vol. II. p. 585, and was more fully told by De Quincey in *Tail's Magazine*, October 1834, reprinted in his collected works.

P. 326, l. 379. *Mary*:—I.e. the maid of Buttermere.

P. 327, l. 428. *Prate somewhat loudly of the whereabout*:—*Macbeth*, II. i. 58, 'The very stones prate of my whereabout.'—Prof. Knight.

P. 329, ll. 497, 498. Shakespeare, *Henry V.*, IV. iii. 53. In ed. 1850 for 'Salisburys' is printed 'Salsburys.'

P. 330, ll. 533, 534. *Æolus* was the divine or semi-divine ruler of the winds in the later Greek mythology.

L. 563. *He who penned, the other day*:—Solomon Gessner of Zürich (1730-1787), artist and poet. His poem *Der Tod Abels* was extremely popular, and the English translation of it went through a very large number of editions.

L. 564. *The Bard*:—Young, the author of *Night Thoughts*.

L. 567. The sarcasm of this parenthesis is directed at least as much against the believers in Macpherson's *Ossian* as against the preacher who ornaments his discourse with this motley selection of poets. The whole of this passage, ll. 551-572, is practically unique in Wordsworth's poetry. Wordsworth often expresses indignation and fairly often scorn; but he has no other passage of this kind of sustained and measured satire. *The Poet's Epitaph* (vol. II. p. 335) is the nearest parallel, but the satire there is fiercer, just as the underlying feeling, expressed in the concluding verses, is more passionate.

P. 331, l. 595. *Though most at home in this their dear domain*:—I.e. in a great city like London.

P. 336. BOOK EIGHTH. RETROSPECT—LOVE OF NATURE LEADING TO LOVE OF MAN, l. 52. 'These lines are from a descriptive Poem—*Malvern Hills*—by one of Mr. Wordsworth's oldest friends, Mr. Joseph Cottle.'—Ed. 1850: cp. *op. cit.*, ll. 952-956. Joseph Cottle (1770-1853) was for a short time a bookseller and publisher at Bristol, and his own literary aspirations led him to form an enthusiastic attachment to Coleridge. He published, on terms very generous to the authors and unprofitable to himself, early poems of Coleridge and Southey, as well as the famous *Lyrical Ballads*, and himself wrote several ambitious poems much worse than the mediocre *Malvern Hills*. He is best known by his extraordinarily tactless, ill-bred, and ill-edited *Recollections*, which nevertheless contain very interesting information about Coleridge, Southey, and others.

P. 337, l. 75. Prof. Knight comments on this line 'The district round Cockermouth'; and on l. 99, 'The Hawkshead district'; as though Wordsworth were referring to each of them separately: but the comparison is between the English Lake Country and some of the most celebrated of foreign scenery. The 'paradise of ten thousand trees' is

apparently the same as 'Gehol's matchless gardens,' since it is the translation of the Chinese name of these gardens, *Van-shoo-yuen*. It is interesting to notice, as Prof. Knight does, that Lord Macartney, who was ambassador extraordinary to Peking (1792-1793) compares the western and wilder garden at Gehol to Lowther Hall in Westmoreland, i.e. to the scenery referred to, in general, by Wordsworth in the text.

L. 81. *Paradise Lost*, iv. 242.—Prof. Knight. Of the Garden of Eden and its—

Flowers worthy of Paradise, which not nice Art
In beds and curious knots, but Nature boon
Poured forth profuse, etc.

P. 339, l. 175. *Galaesus* was the river of Tarentum. Wordsworth evidently has in mind Horace (*Odes*, ii. 6), where in close connection with 'dulce pellitis ovibus Galaesus,' we have the 'long springs and tepid winters,' in 'ver ubi longum tepidasque praebet Jupiter brumas.' In Virgil (*Georgics*, iv. 125 foll.), the *Galaesus* is 'dark' (*niger*), and flows by the few and unfertile acres of the 'Corycian old man,' who has to put up with another kind of winter—

Cum tristis hiems etiam nunc frigore saxa
Rumperet, et glacie cursus frenaret aquarum.

But just before this passage is the phrase *amantes litora myrtos*, which may have suggested 'Adria's myrtle shores' in *The Prelude*. The reference in 'the snow-white herd,' etc., is to Virgil (*Georgics*, ii. 146).

Hinc albi Clitumne, greges et maxima taurus
Victima, saepe tuo perfusi flumine sacro,
Romanos ad templa deum duxere triumphos.

Lucretilis was a hill near Horace's Sabine farm, cp. *Odes*, i. 17.

Velox amoenum saepe *Lucretilem*
Mutat *Lycae*o *Faunus*, etc.—

an ode evidently in Wordsworth's mind.

P. 340, l. 211. *Goslar, once imperial*:—*Goslar*, an important town of the mediæval empire, largely owing to its mines, is on the northern edge of the Harz, of which the ancient name was the *Silva Hercynia*. Wordsworth and his sister spent the extremely cold winter from Oct. 1798 to Feb. 1799 at this town for the purpose of learning German: and here Wordsworth wrote some of his best known short poems, the *Lucy* poems, *The Fountain*, *The Poet's Epitaph*, etc., and portions of *The Prelude*.

P. 343, l. 349. It was the association with *Beaupuy* in 1792, recorded in the next book of *The Prelude*, which finally put Man in the supreme place hitherto occupied by Nature.

P. 345, l. 459. *Thurston-mere*:—*Thurston* was the old name of *Coniston*.

LL. 468-475 are a paraphrase of the *Extract from the Conclusion of a Poem composed in Anticipation of Leaving School*, vol. i. p. 1.

P. 347, ll. 542, 543. *I first entered thy vast dominion*:—In 1788, as is implied in Bk. vii. ll. 52-68.

L. 562. Antiparos is the modern name of one of the Cyclades, known to the ancients as Oliaros. The stalactitic grotto is not described by the ancients, but by several modern travellers. The cave of Yordas is near Ingleton in Lonsdale, Yorkshire.

P. 348, l. 610. *A punctual presence*:—I.e. something present at one point or moment of time.

P. 350, ll. 661-664 are ll. 204-207 of *Paradise Lost*, Bk. xi. with merely such alterations as are necessary for the syntax of the passage here.

L. 680. '*Busy hum*':—Milton, *L'Allegro*, l. 118.

P. 351. BOOK NINTH. RESIDENCE IN FRANCE, l. 40. *Prepared to sojourn in a pleasant town*:—Wordsworth first stayed a short time at Orleans, and then at Blois, both on the Loire.

L. 47. *Mont Martre*:—In the original ed. spelt Mont Martyr; altered in ed. 1857. The Dome of Geneviève is the Panthéon.

L. 52. *The Palace huge*:—The Palais Royal.

P. 352, l. 68. The Bastille was stormed on July 14, 1789.

L. 77. *The painted Magdalene of Le Brun*:—This celebrated picture, now at Notre Dame, hung then in the Carmelite convent in the Rue d'Enfer, for which it was painted by Charles le Brun (b. 1616, d. 1690). It was long supposed to be a portrait of Mlle. de la Vallière, the mistress of Louis xiv., who spent the last thirty-six years of her life in that convent. Prof. Legouis quotes from an article by A. Chuquet in the *Revue Bleue* for Nov. 9, 1895, to the effect that this picture was one of the sights of the day at the time of Wordsworth's visit, sacred music being played for the assistance of those who visited the convent to see it.—*La Jeunesse*, etc., p. 198.

P. 354, l. 176. Carra and Gorsas were revolutionary journalists. Cp. Carlyle, *French Revolution*, Bk. i. ch. vii., Description of the National Convention: quoted by Prof. Knight.

P. 359, l. 409. For the story of Dion see Wordsworth's poem *Dion*, vol. i. p. 358. Eudemus was a philosophic friend, and Timonides a more martial friend, of Dion.

P. 360, l. 419. Michel Beaupuy (1755-1796) belonged to the lesser nobility of Périgord, and was descended on his mother's side from Montaigne. He was one of five brothers, all of whom sympathised with the ideals of the French Revolution. Brought up as one of this highly cultivated and enlightened family, Michel Beaupuy was, says Prof. Legouis, one of the true knights-errant of the Revolution. After serving originally in the ranks of the army, he became a captain in 1791. In the spring of 1792 Wordsworth came to Blois, where Beaupuy was stationed; in July of that year Beaupuy left with his regiment for the army of the Rhine. 'Whether at Mayence, where he was one of the most active

among the noble defenders of the beleaguered city ; in Vendée, where he contributed no less than Kléber and Marceau to destroy the great army [royalist] of that province, where also, he was, perhaps, the first who determined to make a trial of clemency and pardon combined with good faith ; on the Rhine under Pichegru and Moreau, down to the battle of the Elz on November 19, 1796, in which he was killed, throughout he remained worthy of the panegyric written in memory of him by the English poet.'—Prof. Legouis, translated by F. W. Matthews, *Early Life of Wordsworth*. Wordsworth was mistaken (l. 425 above) in supposing that Beaupuy was killed on the Loire : he was dangerously wounded there. At the time of his death he was a general of division. For a fuller biography see *Le Général Michel Beaupuy*, by G. Bussière and E. Legouis.

L. 430. Written in the autumn of 1804.

Ll. 451-3. Angelica and Erminia are the heroines of Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* and Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata* respectively. Wordsworth, who studied Italian at Cambridge with more ardour than he gave to his regular studies, was an admirer of Ariosto and Tasso, whom he held to be 'very absurdly depressed in order to elevate Dante.'—Bishop Wordsworth's *Memoirs of Wordsworth*, vol. II. p. 478.

P. 361, l. 483. The castle of which Wordsworth could not remember the name was doubtless that of Thoury, situated on a spur of the hills immediately outside the park of Chambord. Francis I. built a great part of the Château of Chambord, and was attracted to the place by the neighbourhood of the Comtesse de Thoury, according to a story (no doubt the same which Wordsworth heard) given in Hachette's *Guide*. Prof. Knight, without giving any authority, states that the lady was Claude, the first wife of Francis : but his wives were the last persons likely to be described as 'bound to him in chains of mutual passion.'

P. 362, l. 536. *Mandate without law* :—*I.e.* the *lettres de cachet*, or orders by which the King of France or his government imprisoned or exiled persons without trial.

P. 363, l. 559. Wordsworth refers to the poem *Vaudracour and Julia* : see vol. I. p. 190.

L. 585. This accentuation of the word 'imbecile' was usual down to the beginning of the nineteenth century. Cp. Shelley, *Queen Mab*, viii. 152 : 'His stunted stature and imbecile frame.'—*N.E.D.*

P. 364. BOOK TENTH. RESIDENCE IN FRANCE—(*continued*), l. 16. Louis XVI. was deposed on August 10, 1792, as the immediate consequence of the advance of the Prussians and the Austrians with the royalist *émigrés*. The first battle of the war was that of Valmy, September 20, 1792, in which the Prussians were defeated. The capture of Mayence and the defeat of the Austrians at Jemmappes speedily followed.

L. 44. Wordsworth refers to the 'September Massacres' of September 2-6, 1792, in which a Paris mob, in panic at the advance of the

Prussians under the Duke of Brunswick, murdered the prisoners incarcerated for real or supposed royalist sympathies.

P. 368, l. 199. Harmodius and Aristogiton, in vengeance for a private wrong, murdered Hipparchus, brother of Hippias the tyrant of Athens, 514 B.C. Shortly afterwards Hippias, whose rule had become oppressive from the fear which this incident created, was expelled from Attica; and in the popular mind Harmodius and Aristogiton became heroes and martyrs in the cause of liberty.

P. 370, l. 300. The reference is chiefly to Pitt, with whose policy, and, as he thought, personal ambition, Wordsworth was never in sympathy. Cp. a letter to Sir George Beaumont, written after Pitt's death (Knight, *Life of Wordsworth*, II. (x. p. 69): . . . 'Mr. Pitt is also gone! by tens of thousands looked upon in like manner [with Nelson] as a great loss. For my own part, as probably you know, I have never been able to regard his political life with complacency. I believe him, however, to have been as disinterested a man, and as true a lover of his country, as it was possible for so ambitious a man to be. His first wish (though probably unknown to himself) was that his country should prosper under his administration; his next that it should prosper.'

L. 304. *Wear*:—The text of 1850 has 'wean.' The correction was first made by Mr. Hutchinson, *Oxford Wordsworth, Corrigenda*. Wordsworth refers in this passage to the doctrines of cosmopolitan philanthropy and the universal brotherhood of man which had come into vogue under the influence of Rousseau and his followers. Wordsworth himself was, as *The Prelude* testifies, much enamoured of these doctrines, and gave expression to his views in 1793 in his *Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff*, which, however, was not published till 1876.

L. 321. *That delightful island*:—The Isle of Wight, where Wordsworth stayed with William Calvert.

P. 371, l. 343. *Made of that their God*:—The worship of Reason was actually celebrated with disgraceful orgies in Notre Dame in 1793, and Wordsworth probably had this in mind: but it was the work of the extreme *sans culottes* party, and was sternly put down by the Government of the Reign of Terror.

P. 372, l. 383. Madame Roland seeing, from her scaffold, the colossal Statue of Liberty in the Place de la Révolution, is said to have exclaimed, 'O Liberté, que de crimes on commet en ton nom!' or, according to another account, 'Liberté, comme on t'a jouée!'

P. 375, l. 534. *An honoured teacher of my youth was laid*:—The Rev. William Taylor, schoolmaster of Hawkshead, buried at Cartmell. It was from him, more than any one else, that the composite character of *Matthew* was drawn. Cp. vol. II. p. 337.

P. 377, l. 603. Cp. *The Prelude*, Bk. II. ll. 94-137.

P. 377. BOOK ELEVENTH. FRANCE—(*concluded*), ll. 11, 12. With much

hesitation I follow the punctuation of editions 1850 and 1857, which is also given by Prof. Dowden. Prof. Knight and Mr. Hutchinson give—

in the People was my trust,

And in the virtues which mine eyes had seen.

If we had found this punctuation no suspicion could have arisen: but its very simplicity makes it difficult to imagine how it came to be altered, and, especially, how the comma came to be inserted after 'and.' With the punctuation of edition 1850 the sentence is no doubt loosely constructed, but not unintelligible.

P. 378, l. 73. Wordsworth refers to the prosecutions of such writers as Thomas Paine, author of *The Rights of Man*, and to Pitt's suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Act in 1794.

P. 379, l. 105. Cp. vol. i. p. 351.

P. 381, l. 175. After the execution of Louis xvi., Jan. 21, 1793, and the determination of the French to annex Holland, Pitt gave the French ambassador notice to leave London. France then declared war on England on Feb. 1, 1793. The first important action of the war was the occupation of Toulon by Lord Hood on Aug. 4, 1793. On land England shared the reverses of the allies, but at sea Lord Howe completely defeated the French fleet on June 1, 1794.

L. 205. Particularly in William Godwin's philosophy, as expounded in his *Enquiry concerning Political Justice*, etc. (1793).

P. 382, l. 244. Prof. Legouis, *La Jeunesse de W. Wordsworth*, p. 265, points out that Wordsworth is here paraphrasing Godwin's own words, *Political Justice*, i. 345.

P. 383, l. 283. *Some dramatic tale*:—Wordsworth carried out this idea in the story of the Solitary in *The Excursion*. Much light is also thrown on Wordsworth's mental experience of this period by his play, *The Borderers*.

P. 385, l. 360. Wordsworth refers to the coronation of Napoleon as 'Emperor of the French,' in 1804, by the Pope, whom he summoned to Paris for the purpose.

L. 375. *Thy ear, who now*:—Coleridge was at Syracuse from Aug. to Nov. 1804.

L. 379. Timoleon, a noble of Corinth, rescued Syracuse, and Sicily in general, from domestic tyrannies and Carthaginian invasion (B.C. 344-337), but, unlike Napoleon (this is the thought in Wordsworth's mind), refused to make himself a tyrant.

P. 386, l. 420. Enna was the place where, in Greek mythology, Proserpine was gathering flowers when she was carried off by Pluto, the god of the Underworld.

L. 434. Possibly Wordsworth wrote 'Philosopher and Bard': at any rate Empedocles was both. For Archimedes, cp. *The Excursion*, viii., 220 and note.

P. 387, l. 449. Theocritus, *Idyll* vii. 78.

P. 389. BOOK TWELFTH. IMAGINATION AND TASTE, HOW IMPAIRED AND RESTORED, L. 61. This is a very unusual rhythm for Wordsworth, and I am sometimes tempted to suspect that he meant the word 'trust' to end the previous line; both lines would in that case have shown quite usual rhythms.

P. 391, l. 151. *I knew a maid*:—Mary Hutchinson.

P. 392, l. 223. 'Her' must refer to the mind which is called in the previous line 'lord and master.'

P. 393, l. 233. Prof. Legouis was the first to point out that the scene of this incident is fixed as the neighbourhood of the Border Beacon, near Penrith, by a comparison of ll. 261-266 below, with Bk. vi. ll. 230-236.

L. 262. *The loved one at my side*:—Prof. Knight's note is 'His Sister': but the reference to Bk. vi., given in the last note, will make it clear that Mary Hutchinson is meant.

L. 277. Cp. Coleridge's *Dejection* (written and published in 1802), stanza iv.

P. 394, l. 287. *One Christmas-time*:—In 1783.

P. 398. BOOK THIRTEENTH. IMAGINATION AND TASTE, HOW IMPAIRED AND RESTORED—(*concluded*), l. 141. With this and the following paragraph, cp. *Introd.*, p. li.

P. 401, l. 265. The preceding passage recalls much of the Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads* (1800).

P. 403, l. 353. The reference here is not, as Prof. Dowden thought, to the *Descriptive Sketches*, which Coleridge read at Cambridge in 1794, but to 'a manuscript poem which still [1815] remains unpublished, but of which the stanza and tone of style were the same as those of *The Female Vagrant*, as originally printed in the first volume of the *Lyrical Ballads*,' and of which Coleridge proceeds, in the passage of the *Biographia Literaria* (ch. iv.), from which these words are quoted, to give an account which exactly tallies with Wordsworth's words in the text. Coleridge heard this poem in his twenty-fourth year, i.e. probably in 1796.

P. 403. BOOK FOURTEENTH. CONCLUSION, l. 3, *A youthful friend*:—Robert Jones. See vol. i. p. 12.

P. 405, ll. 71, 72. *Broods over the dark abyss*:—*Paradise Lost*, i. 21, 'Brooding on the vast abyss.'—Prof. Knight.

Ll. 89, 90. *That glorious faculty that higher minds bear with them as their own*:—i.e. Imagination.

P. 406, l. 120. This distinction is that, well-known in philosophy, between the discursive or logical reason, by which the mind argues from one fact or hypothesis to another, and the intuitive reason, by which the mind perceives axioms and first-principles.

P. 408, l. 233. *Thanks in sincerest verse have been elsewhere*:—See *The Sparrow's Nest*, vol. i. p. 116.

P. 409, l. 243. All editions hitherto have printed this line completely between brackets, to the destruction of the whole sentence. Prof. Dowden first inserted a comma after 'stealth' in the preceding line. By placing the first bracket after 'still,' we at any rate restore 'still' to its place in the sentence as introducing the contrast to the clauses introduced by 'spite of' (l. 237), 'in spite of' (239): but commas would well replace the brackets.

L. 245. *That beauty, which, as Milton sings:—Paradise Lost, ix. 490.*—Prof. Knight.

L. 269. Cp. *She was a Phantom of delight*, vol. i. p. 310.

Ll. 273, 274. Ed. 1850, Prof. Dowden and Mr. Hutchinson print commas after 'stars' and 'and.' They were rightly removed in ed. 1857.

P. 410, l. 318. The distinction between Fancy and Imagination, which was the basis of Wordsworth's classification of his poems, is here in his mind. The main subject of *The Prelude* has been the history of the Imagination.

P. 411, l. 355. Raisley Calvert, brother of the William Calvert with whom Wordsworth stayed in the Isle of Wight in the summer of 1793 (cp. above, Bk. x. 320), died in January 1795, leaving Wordsworth a legacy of £900. Cp. *Miscellaneous Sonnets*, Part I. No. xxxvi. above, vol. i. p. 446.

P. 412, l. 395. *That summer:*—The summer of 1797, in which Wordsworth and his sister settled at Alfoxden. Cp. *Introd.*

P. 413, l. 419. The death of John Wordsworth. Cp. above, p. 545, and *Introd.* p. xliv.

POEMS NOT APPEARING IN THE EDITION OF 1849-50

P. 414. *LINES written as a School Exercise at Hawkshead, anno ætatis 14.* 'It may be perhaps as well to mention that the first verses which I wrote were a task imposed by my master, the subject 'The Summer Vacation,' and of my own accord I added others upon 'Return to School.' There was nothing remarkable in either poem; but I was called upon, among other scholars, to write verses upon the completion of the second centenary from the foundation of the school in 1585 by Archbishop Sandys. The verses were much admired, far more than they deserved, for they were but a tame imitation of Pope's versification, and a little in his style. This exercise, however, put it into my head to compose verses from the impulse of my own mind, and I wrote, while yet a schoolboy, a long poem running upon my own adventures, and the scenery of the country in which I was brought up. The only part of that poem which has been preserved is the conclusion of it, which stands at the beginning of my collected Poems.'—*Autobiographical Memoranda* in Christopher Wordsworth's *Memoirs of William Wordsworth*, p. 10.

L. 16. 'Softened the terrors of her awful mien':—This line has not been

traced. Possibly it is not an actual quotation, but merely a reminiscence of Pope, *Essay on Man*, II. 217 :—

Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,
As to be hated needs but to be seen.

P. 417. SONNET, ON SEEING MISS HELEN MARIA WILLIAMS WEEP AT A TALE OF DISTRESS. 1787 :—Published under the *nom de plume* 'Axiologus' in the *European Magazine*, March 1787. 'Axiologus,' of course, is meant to translate 'Words—worth,' and Coleridge addressed lines to Wordsworth under this title. Cp. Knight, *Eversley Wordsworth*, vol. VIII. p. 210.

P. 417. SWEET WAS THE WALK. *Before May 1792* :—Enclosed in a letter of Dorothy Wordsworth to Miss Polland, May 6, 1792. The overloading of adjectives is obvious, but so is the accurate choice of words to express real objects.

P. 418. THE BIRTH OF LOVE. *Published 1795* :—Published as a translation of some French stanzas in a volume of *Poems by Francis Wrangham*, 1795. The French stanzas were signed 'Anon,' but were probably by Wrangham.

P. 419. THE CONVICT. Published in the *Morning Post*, Dec. 14, 1797, signed Mortimer. This information I owe to Mr. Hutchinson. Hitherto the only known publication was in the *Lyrical Ballads* of 1798, after which it was never reprinted.

P. 420. ANDREW JONES. First published in the *Lyrical Ballads* of 1800; omitted from ed. 1820 and subsequent editions.

P. 421. ON NATURE'S INVITATION DO I COME. This and the following piece are fragments of *The Recluse*, quoted by Christopher Wordsworth in the *Memoirs*. Cp. Preface to *The Excursion*, above, p. 32, and *Water-Fowl*, vol. I. p. 369.

L. 3. *Of* :—In the *Memoirs* 'on.'

L. 24. In *The Recluse*, as published by Macmillan and Co. in 1888, the phrase is 'a breath of fragrance'; Knight, in *Eversley Wordsworth*, vol. II. p. 118, retains the reading of the *Memoirs*, 'or.'

P. 422, l. 27. Twelve lines of *The Recluse* are here omitted. The copyright belongs to Messrs. Macmillan.

P. 422. 'BLEAK SEASON WAS IT, TURBULENT AND BLEAK.' In the *Memoirs* the first line of this fragment is given as, 'Bleak season was it, turbulent and wild'; whether Christopher Wordsworth had any authority for 'wild' is unknown.

L. 3. *Bursts* :—Knight, 'burst.'

L. 9. *Like* :—*Memoirs*, 'as.'

P. 422. AMONG ALL LOVELY THINGS MY LOVE HAD BEEN. This poem,

called in Dorothy Wordsworth's *Journal* 'The Glow-worm,' was written on April 12, 1802; but the incident (as Wordsworth wrote to Coleridge) 'took place about seven years ago between my sister and me.' The poem was only published in the *Poems in Two Volumes*, 1807.

P. 424. THE TINKER. *April 27, 28, 1802*:—I am allowed to include these verses, here printed for the first time in a collective edition of Wordsworth, by the kindness of Mr. T. Norton Longman, to whom the copyright belongs. They were first published in Mr. Hale White's *Description of the Wordsworth and Coleridge MSS. in possession of Mr. T. N. Longman*. The date of the poem is given in Dorothy Wordsworth's *Grasmere Journal*.

P. 424. WRITTEN IN A GROTTTO. *Published 1802*:—These lines were first claimed for Wordsworth by Mr. Ernest Hartley Coleridge (*Athenæum*, Nov. 4, 1893), and have been accepted by other students of Wordsworth. I cannot do better than quote Mr. Hutchinson's note. "It may be remembered," writes E. H. C., "that the phrase 'monthly grave' is to be found in *Lines to the Moon* (1835); and in one of Wordsworth's latest sonnets, that *To Lucca Giordano*, the aged poet turns with pleasure to the delightful vision of 'young Endymion, couched on Latmos Hill.'" The suggestion is undoubtedly a happy one. The rhyme-arrangement of these lines resembles that of the piece beginning, *With how sad steps, O Moon, thou climb'st the Sky*, which first appeared in *Poems in Two Volumes* (1807) but may have been written in or about 1802. Both pieces appear to be experiments in metre. They are neither sonnets nor quatorzains, but *quinzains*, or stanzas consisting of fifteen lines each; though that published in 1807 was subsequently curtailed by one line and placed amongst the *Miscellaneous Sonnets* (1815 onwards). Moreover, the turn of the sentence in lines 8 and 9—the repetition of the substantive (*Nymphs*) in apposition, qualified by an adjective or adjectival phrase—is of frequent occurrence in Wordsworth's poetry. Cf. *Misc. Son.*, part II. xx. ll. 7, 8:

As if to vindicate her beauty's right,
Her beauty thoughtlessly disparaged.'

P. 425. THE RAINS AT LENGTH HAVE CEASED:—Undated, but extracted by Prof. Knight from Dorothy Wordsworth's *Grasmere Journal*.

P. 425. SONNET. *Published 1803*:—"This sonnet bears no signature in the *Morning Post*, but Coleridge, in an unpublished letter, assigns it to Wordsworth. Cp. line 12 with line 53 of the poem, No. II., on *September*, 1819 (*Poems of Sentiment*, xxviii., vol. II. p. 362), and with a passage in the *Essay on Epitaphs* in which the story of this sonnet is related in prose.'

P. 425. INSCRIPTION FOR A SUMMER-HOUSE IN THE ORCHARD, TOWN-END, GRASMERE. 1804:—Sent in a letter to Sir George Beaumont,

Christmas Day, 1804. First published in Knight's *Memorials of Coleorton*, vol. I. p. 81.

P. 426. GEORGE AND SARAH GREEN. 1808 :—Published by De Quincey in his *Recollections of Grasmere* in *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*, Sept. 1839. Prof. Knight quotes some variants from a copy by Dorothy Wordsworth.

P. 427. THROUGH CUMBRIAN WILDS, IN MANY A MOUNTAIN CAVE. *Probably* 1812 :—For the date of this sonnet see note on *Grief, thou hast lost an ever ready Friend*, vol. I. p. 439. The sonnet following occurs in the same MS. ; both first published by Prof. Knight.

P. 430. TRANSLATION OF PART OF THE FIRST BOOK OF THE *ÆNEID*. *Between* 1816 and 1832 :—Published in the *Philological Museum*, 1832 ; part of a translation of three books of *The Æneid*. The exact date of the translation cannot be fixed, unless the letters of Wordsworth, when they are published, will fix it.

P. 431. THE SCOTTISH BROOM ON BIRD-NEST BRAE. *Probably* 1818 :—Published by Knight without mention of source, but with note of Rev. T. Hutchinson of Kimbolton. 'Written, in my opinion, at the General Election of 1818.' Bird-nest, says Prof. Knight, was the old name of Brougham Hall.

P. 431. PLACARD FOR A POLL BEARING AN OLD SHIRT. *Probably* 1818 :—From a MS. at Lowther Castle, published by Knight, *Eversley Wordsworth*, vol. VIII. p. 271. Another squib on Lord Brougham.

P. 432. SONNET, *Author's Voyage down the Rhine (Thirty Years Ago)*. 1820 or 1821 :—Published in *Memorials of a Tour on the Continent in 1822*. See vol. II. p. 84.

P. 436. COMPOSED WHEN A PROBABILITY EXISTED OF OUR BEING OBLIGED TO QUIT RYDAL MOUNT AS A RESIDENCE, l. 164 :—Apparently the expression was left incomplete. 'Poetry' or 'poesy' is the most natural supplement : the latter is frequently used by Wordsworth.

P. 437. 1826 :—First published by Prof. Knight. Prof. Dowden cps. *Inscriptions*, IX. See vol. II. p. 446.

P. 439. TO THE UTILITARIANS. Sent in a letter to Henry Crabb Robinson, May 5, 1833. Wordsworth added : 'Is the above intelligible? I fear not ! I know, however, my own meaning, and that's enough for Manuscripts.' The verses are intelligible enough till the last three lines, in which 'agreeing' seems to be used as equivalent to 'harmonising.'

P. 439. A CENOT MADE BY WORDSWORTH :—Published 1835 in *Yarrow Revisited and other Poems*.

P. 440. *SQUIB. Probably 1838*:—Sent to Crabb Robinson, March 26, 1836, according to Prof. Knight and Prof. Dowden, but if *N. E. D.* is right in saying that Sir George Evans was made a K.C.B. in Aug. 1837, the date of Wordsworth's letter was probably 1838. The 'red ribbon' obviously refers to that distinction. Sir George de Lacy Evans was a very distinguished soldier, whose bravery and ability were frequently recognised from the days when he served under Abercromby and Wellington to the Crimean War, where he commanded the 2nd Division. His leadership of the British Legion, in the service of Queen Christina of Spain against Don Carlos, was a most brilliant exploit; but he was an advanced advocate of the Reform Bill and a radical M.P., and Wordsworth's politics in those years were strongly Tory. It is only fair to add that Wordsworth did not publish this gross libel.

P. 441. *TRANSLATIONS from Michelangelo*:—*Cp. Misc. Sonnets, Part I. Nos. xxiv.-xxvi., vol. I. p. 441.* The date of these translations is unknown. They were written by Wordsworth in the first vol. of a copy of ed. 1836, which subsequently became the property of Lord (Chief-Justice) Coleridge. They may have belonged to the period of the other translations from Michelangelo—1806—or may have been subsequent to ed. 1836. The original quatrain refers to Michelangelo's statue of Night: cp. J. A. Symond's *Life of Michelangelo*, vol. II. p. 35.

P. 441. *From the Latin of Thomas Warton*:—Warton's lines are given by Prof. Knight and Prof. Dowden:

Sonne veni ! quamvis placidissima Mortis imago es,
 Consortem cupio ne tamen esse tori ;
 Huc ades, haud abiture cito ! nam sic sine vita
 Vivere quam suave est, sic sine morte mori.

P. 442. *TRANSLATION OF TASSO'S SONNET, Vasco, le cui felici ardite antenne . . .*, l. 14:—The sestet of this translation, undated, was written in Wordsworth's handwriting on a sheet of MS., sold at Sotheby's in the week ending Dec. 26, 1896; published by the late Dr. Garnett, of the British Museum, who added the translation of the Octave. Mr. Hutchinson kindly drew my attention to these lines, as well as to the translation which follows.

P. 442. *TRANSLATION OF THE ATHENIAN SONG IN HONOUR OF HARMODIUS AND ARISTOGITON. Between 1800 and 1811*:—First published by Prof. Knight in the *Classical Review* for Feb. 1901 (vol. xv. p. 82), and dated by him 'the first decade' of the nineteenth century. The verses are a fairly close, but somewhat expanded, translation of the well-known Athenian Scolion, or drinking song, 'έν μύρτον κλαδι τὸ ξίφος φορήσω.' The first line should probably begin 'I will bear': the 'and' represents nothing in the Greek. In l. 16 'myrtle' should probably be 'myrtle's,' as in l. 2.

P. 443. PROTEST AGAINST THE BALLOT. 1838:—Published only in the collected *Sonnets*, 1838, and a Supplement to the collective edd., issued in 1839. Cp. *Said Secrecy to Cowardice and Fraud*, vol. II. p. 386.

P. 443. A POET TO HIS GRANDCHILD, *Sequel to 'A Plea for Authors'*:—Cp. vol. I. p. 476. This sonnet was published only, like the last, in 1838 and 1839.

P. 444. ON A PORTRAIT OF ISABELLA FENWICK, PAINTED BY MARGARET GILLIES. *Rydal Mount, New Year's Day*, 1840:—This and the following were first published in Christopher Wordsworth's *Memoirs of William Wordsworth*.

P. 445. OH BOUNTY WITHOUT MEASURE, WHILE THE GRACE. *7th April 1840. My 70th Birthday*:—Sent to Crabb Robinson. First published by Prof. Knight.

P. 445. 'WHEN SEVERN'S SWEEPING FLOOD HAD OVERTHROWN.' *Rydal Mount, Jan. 23, 1842*:—Published, with poems by James Montgomery and two others, in 1842 to aid in the erection of a church at Cardiff.

P. 446. THE EAGLE AND THE DOVE. *Published 1842*:—*The Eagle and the Dove* was contributed to a volume published in honour of the royalist students of the college at Vannes who revolted against Napoleon in 1815; *La Petite Chouannerie, ou Histoire d'un Collège Breton sous l'Empire*, 1842. Landor and others contributed to the volume.

P. 447. ODE ON THE INSTALLATION OF HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS PRINCE ALBERT AS CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE, JULY 6, 1847:—This Ode was published in the newspapers as 'written for the occasion by the Poet Laureate, by royal command.' But Prof. Knight says:—'There is no evidence, however, that Wordsworth wrote a single line of it.' It has been attributed to Christopher Wordsworth and to Edward Quillinan. Perhaps all three had a hand in it. Wordsworth was suffering much in spirits at the time, especially from the illness of his daughter, Dora Quillinan, who, as a matter of fact, died on July 9, three days after the performance of this Ode.

APPENDIX: POEMS OF 1793

P. 450. I follow Prof. Dowden and Mr. Hutchinson in reprinting these two poems in their original form, the alterations in subsequent editions being so great. Prof. Knight follows the same plan with regard to the *Descriptive Sketches* only.

P. 451. AN EVENING WALK, l. 29. *April tear*:—Prof. Legouis points out that 'April tear' is taken from Lady Winchelsea's 'But April-drops our tears,' in *Life's Progress*.

P. 452, l. 81. *Visto*:—This version of the word 'vista' is found occasionally. The *Cent. Dict.* quotes Gay, *To a Young Lady*:

Then all beside each glade and visto

You'd see nymphs lying like Calisto.

P. 456, l. 254. The text of 1793 gives 'Minden's charnel plain'; but the list of *errata* in that ed. gives 'Bunker's charnel hill.'

DESCRIPTIVE SKETCHES

P. 463, l. 9. The original text has, 'Where Silence, on her night of wing, o'erbroods.' I have, with great reluctance, altered the text, because I feel quite convinced that, even in his earliest days, Wordsworth would not have written an expression so devoid of meaning. If the phrase 'night of wing' could mean 'night made by the overshadowing wing of Silence,' still silence could not conceivably be spoken of as 'on' such a night: whereas 'on her wing of night' is an obvious and harmless expression.

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